

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 261 779

PS 015 276

AUTHOR Bergstrom, Joan M.
TITLE School's Out--Now What? Creative Choices for Your
Child: Afternoons, Weekends, Vacation
REPORT NO ISBN-0-89815-131-7
PUB DATE 84
NOTE 338p.
AVAILABLE FROM Ten Speed Press, P.O. Box 7123, Berkeley, CA 94707
(\$10.95).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (C 5)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC14 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *After School Programs; *Childhood Interests;
*Childhood Needs; Child Rearing; Child
Responsibility; Community Programs; Community
Resources; *Daily Living Skills; *Enrichment
Activities; Home Programs; Individual Development;
Parent Role; Safety Education
IDENTIFIERS *Latchkey Children

ABSTRACT

The central theme of this book is that parents should be directly involved in structuring their children's out-of-school time. Out-of-school or "free time" offers great opportunities for children to learn from new experiences and to develop, through carefully selected activities, a sense of competence, self-esteem, and achievement. Focus is on the developmental needs of middle childhood, when children are six to twelve years old, and real-life examples and everyday language are used to direct a parent toward understanding and developing his child's interests. Specifically presented are the following chapter titles: "A Child's Life Out of School"; "Parents' Roles and Special Insights" (appeals to parents to trust themselves and express their convictions to their children); "Resources--What Are the Options?" (gives detailed information on searching for resources for activities); "Fostering Independence, or the Other Three R's: Resourcefulness, Responsibility, and Reliability" (offers a view of the child as member of a family); "Protecting Children's Safety" (starts with home safety and moves into the neighborhood); and "Putting It All Together" (includes a section entitled "A False Start Is Not a Flop" for those who fear failure or are easily discouraged. Six appendices list child-serving organizations; resources for computers and children; books about television and children; and books and organizations with information on safety, first aid, and health. (DST)

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Afternoons, Weekends, Vacations

School's Out—Now What?

Creative Choices For Your Child

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... Helping to schedule a child's time after school, on the weekend, and during vacation doesn't imply that parents are imposing their own ambitions on their youngsters, and it needn't require extra expense, according to Dr. Bergstrom.

Throughout the book, Dr. Bergstrom is intent on encouraging parents to trust their own feelings, whether they're heading up traditional households or juggling the challenges of being a single parent.

— THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

... I wholeheartedly support your central theme that parents need to assert the responsibility and to become directly involved in structuring their children's out of school time. As you thoroughly demonstrate, out of school or "free time" offers great opportunities for children to learn from new experiences and to develop, through carefully selected activities, a sense of competence, self-esteem, and achievement.

The options your book presents for parents to make more meaningful the time children spend out of school are thoughtful, carefully described, and accompanied by insightful examples and valuable checklists.

Your book will be a valuable tool for parents, educators and other adults committed to enhancing the development of our most valuable resource — our children.

— Margaret M. Heckler
Secretary, Department of Health
and Human Services

... (Joan Bergstrom is) really addressing the nagging questions that many parents have. There are plenty of books out on survival skills for children and adults, but none of them talk about development issues — Joan does. She's really saying, 'Take a look at who you are, and who your child is, and what role activities can play in his or her development.'

— Michelle Seligson
Director, School-Age Child Care Project
Wellesley College
Center For Research on Women

School's Out— Now What?

CHOICES FOR YOUR CHILD'S TIME

Joan M. Bergstrom



Ten Speed Press

- PHOTOGRAPHS** Special thanks and acknowledgement to the photographers who contributed to this book:
 Jon Goell, courtesy Boston Children's Museum, p. 36, 108
 Richard Howard, courtesy Boston Children's Museum, p. 18, 84
 Bonnie Kamin, p. 10, 40, 236
 Jane Scherr, all others
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 **TEN SPEED PRESS**
 P.O. Box 7123, Berkeley, California 94707

Type set by Green Mountain
 Printed in the United States of America
 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

CIP
 Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
 Bergstrom, Joan M.
 School's out, now what?

Bibliography: p.
 Includes index.

1. Students—Recreation. 2. Students—Time management.
 3. Student activities. 4. Leisure. I. Title.
 LB3608.B47 1984 371.8 84—51171
 ISBN 0-89815-131-7 paper
 ISBN 0-89815-140-6 cloth

To my husband Gary and my son Craig
for their love, understanding, care, support,
inspiration and wisdom. Both of you
have been very significant in your contri-
butions to my personal and professional
development. Words cannot express
my deepest feelings!

Thanks

There is one person who was especially important in the writing of this book: my special friend and colleague at Wheelock College, Marcia M. Folsom. Marcia possesses many fine qualities — the ability to write clearly and to reassure and support, and she made constructive contributions throughout the writing and editing of this manuscript. Many thanks to all the Folsoms — Mike, Jamie, and Raphie, too — for their involvement, inspiration, and interest. Their hospitality and kindness will always be remembered.

Many children, parents, teachers, psychologists, librarians, and school principals gave of their time and their ideas to make this book a reality. Principal Charles Crisafulli, and teachers — Erna Betcher, Ann Davitt, Margaret Gonder-Odell, and Kathleen Ohde — who were then at the Roger Wellington School were especially supportive. At a time when I was trying to answer many questions about children's use of out-of-school time, they offered, as a team, very innovative solutions. Three exceptional children who helped me in this project were Ricky Gazarian, Charlie Margosian, Jr., and David Puhl.

In the end, dozens of people played important roles in the creating and writing of this book. I am especially appreciative to the following people for their hours of generous help in reading and making valuable suggestions: Bernice Broyde, Kathleen Carbonell-Sullivan, Mary F. Carey, Lois Coit, Rita Chrappa, Anne Coolidge, Paula Gopin, Debbie Hale, Susan Harris-Sharple, Mary Iatridis, Mieko Kamii, Constance Koeneman, Irving Lazar, Sandra Levesque, Claire McCarthy, Bernadette McNally, Gwen Morgan, Patricia Ramsey, Michelle Seligson, Phyllis Sonnenschein, Susan Speroff, Anne Stair-Rosenbloom, Martha Shea-Smith, Joan Tepper, Susan Todd, Arlene Treacy-Montgomery, Mary Wallace and Geneva Woodruff. Susan Todd worked with me in the early stages, and from the beginning she perceived this subject as an important topic.

Francis Litman, Rose Margosian, Elliott Medrich and Joanne Shoemaker each played a painstaking role. I thank them for all of their excellent and timely counsel throughout the writing process. All four gave generously of themselves to read through the manuscript several times at various stages to provide me with direction.

The Wheelock College librarians Marie Cotter, Jean Finn, and Thelma Thompson spent hours assisting me in locating necessary information. I thank

all three of them for their never-ending persistence and patience in helping me with my almost daily requests. There were many children's librarians and parents who made suggestions and spent time compiling lists of books for children. I am especially grateful to Paula Gopin, Amanda Nelson, and Shelly Marr for their contributions to that section of the book. Jacqueline Trudel did a consistent job in searching out a wide variety of resources, some of which seemed at times almost impossible to locate. Maureen Brown and Catherine Field made invaluable contributions to the section on computers. Catherine also provided me excellent and cheerful editorial support throughout several stages of the manuscript.

There were many times when I needed a "vision" of how to proceed. Robert Johnson, Sandy Jones, Rochelle Mayer, and Steven Star were available to guide and encourage me with each next stage. Harald Bakken made a distinctive contribution by introducing me to the world of humor and its poignant, entertaining messages.

The topic of children's life after school and out of school has been of interest to me for several years. However, I was particularly fortunate in receiving a fellowship from Northwestern University in 1979 to study this area. During that semester, and since, Arlene Daniels of Northwestern University has generously shared with me her years of experience and keen wisdom.

The team at Ten Speed Press are superb — their vision and creativity is exceptional. George Young has an extraordinary way of conveying his faith and respect. As he shared his insights and experiences, he stimulated me to think in new and innovative ways. Jackie Wan wholeheartedly shared her impressive editing and writing skills. Jackie waded through the lengthy drafts of each chapter, and contributed her professional and personal expertise as she helped shape and edit the final version of the book. From the moment I met Beverly Anderson, I was confident that her creative energy would result in an exciting visual design for the book.

Throughout the writing of the manuscript, there was a group of people at Wheelock College who I would describe as having an especially close relationship to me. Each had a unique way of supporting me throughout this endeavor. They are Marjorie Bakken, Daniel S. Cheever, Jr., Elizabeth Ann Liddle, and Gordon Marshall.

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JANE SCHIER

Prologue

My only child, Craig, was eight when I began to think of his time out of school in a fresh light. I had been working full time since he was two, teaching early childhood development at Wheelock College. Daily life had gone fairly smoothly, thanks to a combination of sitters, preschool, extended day care, and a strong commitment from me and my husband, Gary. We had built a comfortable structure that ran with only an occasional breakdown. But one fall evening, just after Craig had begun third grade, the phone rang. It was Mr. Sanders, Craig's soccer coach. We had filled out a form in June indicating Craig wanted to join the soccer team, and I'd watched him kick the ball up and down our driveway with great intensity all summer long. I also knew his idol, an older boy down the street who occasionally stopped by to give him pointers, had been an enthusiastic soccer player for years. Craig and I were both excited that he would finally get a chance to play with a team. But as Mr. Sanders continued to talk I became less excited and more concerned. "There will be two practices each week," said Mr. Sanders, "Tuesday and Thursday, and games either Saturday or Sunday." When we checked our calendar next to the phone I began to wonder how we would get to all of those games and practices. Our calendar was already covered with commitments.

Craig's interests and opportunities were clearly beginning to expand beyond the bounds of our old structure. I knew the theory that children ages six to eight became more independent and eager to pursue new activities and doing some things with special friends was important to them. The theory was rapidly turning into reality. As the textbooks predicted, Craig was now ripe for experimenting and engaging in new activities that were of particular interest to him. With his growing abilities and needs for learning, his life — and mine — was on the brink of becoming very different and much more complex.

I realized that we were just beginning a new phase and I already had many questions that I could not begin to answer. What other activities would he like to participate in? After soccer season, would he like to try basketball or tennis? What about getting where he was going? What about homework? How much time should be planned and how much should be left for him to play? Could we encourage him to follow through on his pursuits? How could we respect his desire to do things on his own and yet feel confident he was safe? In what ways could Gary and I share with him some of the things we had done as children and still love to do today? How would this all fit in with our family's already crowded schedule? My background did not provide me with any concrete steps to follow but I really wanted to respond to his needs and interests.

I turned to my usual resources: my own childhood experiences, research findings, books, and other parents. As I recalled the things that I had done and enjoyed as a child, I clearly remembered taking violin lessons for several years, and later studying with a fabulous teacher at the conservatory. I loved to make dolls and to sew and I was a good swimmer. With my sister and brother and the other children in the neighborhood I played outside for hours. Over the years we had several rabbits and a dog as pets. It was also easy to recall some experiences that had not been so pleasant.

Simultaneously, I began to review the literature on children's leisure time but quickly discovered that there was very little available. At that time Dr. Elliott Medrich, a sociologist at the University of California, had just completed a study regarding the out-of-school time of 764 eleven- and twelve-year-olds. Both the children and their mothers were interviewed. Dr. Medrich and his associates studied the types of growing and learning that were taking place outside the classroom. They had explored several provocative questions. In particular, they wanted to learn what constitutes an "advantaged" or "disadvantaged" out-of-school life and how the use of this time affected a child's future. Medrich's comprehensive study, which later comprised the book *The Serious Business of Growing Up*, published in 1982, was an inspiration to me

confirming my hunch that we needed to know much more about how this time was spent and how, in fact, it could be used to its fullest by all families. While Dr. Medrich concentrated his study on preadolescents, he echoed my concern that we knew little if anything about what children between the ages of six and twelve did before and after school.

With the help of several graduate students, I conducted a study. We interviewed a group of children and then their mothers. In addition, we helped each child keep a diary each day for a week. This study explored the range of activities — sports, lessons, hobbies, household chores, television watching, reading, homework, etc. — in which these children were engaged. We tried to gather as complete a picture as possible of how they spent their time.

The first conclusion I drew was that, as a parent, I was not alone. Out-of-school time was an important issue to everyone. During the interviews, many parents voiced this concern; just about every mother was curious to know what other children in the study were doing. Typical questions were: "You have interviewed my child — do you think she had enough to do?" "Does she have too much to do?" "Does she have enough free time?" "Does he do things with this time that make sense?" "How do other parents determine what their children will do?" "My child is having trouble with math, should she be tutored?" "I'm not musical and I sure tried several things, but I'd like my child to master an instrument, so what might I do?" "I want my child to have a rich life, but sometimes I wonder if she is over-scheduled." In short, I was now asked to give advice to others.

Later I developed a scheme to interview a broader cross-section of children and their families, from suburban, urban, and rural settings, and from a variety of family structures. Again I carefully listened to what all these children and families thought about children's time and began to realize that many parents had already developed very creative solutions to common problems.

I began questioning adults trying to determine how certain

events in their childhood had helped them develop life-long interests, competencies, and talents. It was important for me to find out the ways their parents or other adults had encouraged them to pursue an activity and then to see, if possible, how this affected their lives — as children and later as adults. I was interested to know who, not only practically, but also psychologically, supported and encouraged ordinary people as well as the famous and the gifted, and in what ways this encouragement was given. Whenever I read about or studied any person's life, whether it was a beautician, artist, scientist, musician, or athlete, I looked closely at early life to see if I could catch a glimpse of how later interests were fostered.

For several years I had been offering workshops: "Helping Children to Develop Independence at Home" or "Teaching Your Child the *Other 3 Rs* — Resourcefulness, Responsibility, and Reliability." Graduate students assisted in these workshops which were designed for parents and their children ages six to twelve. Again, families came from a range of backgrounds: dual career families, single parent families, families from urban, suburban, and rural areas. The workshops provided a relaxed setting where children and parents could come together and discuss appropriate ways to encourage children's independence and creative use of time. Parents were particularly interested in talking about television watching, educational activities, family trips, reading, homework, computers, and the quality of their children's lives. They wanted to know how others handled the problem of when friends could or couldn't come to play and how they left messages and communicated as a family. We also discussed subjects of special concern when children are left home alone — losing a key, boredom, strange phone calls, and fires. One parent commented, "When I was a child my mother was always there with milk and cookies when I came home from school. I can't be there every afternoon, and I used to feel terribly guilty about it; now I am beginning to think because of the quality of his out-of-school time, my child's life is probably more meaningful than mine was."

All of these activities gave me insights into the many ways families have made their children's out-of-school time come alive for them. I found that certain attitudes were present in the families who are able to make this time meaningful. In nearly all of these families, the concept of "planning" or thinking about this time emerged as a key issue.

Most parents have no one to talk to about this topic. No natural arena existed to share and interpret such information; there was no handbook to tell parents what to do; no language to discuss out-of-school life, and no metaphorical or actual "watering hole" where parents could share their wisdom and difficulties. It seemed to me that there ought to be some way to exchange knowledge and share experiences, and that is how this book came to be.

This book is not a theoretical study of how children spend their time. It describes real children in real situations; it addresses the kinds of experiences that teach them the myriad of lessons that life holds. With this guide, parents and children can better define what they want during these important years, and parents can make their children's out-of-school lives better. You as a parent, I hope, will feel empowered and supported to respond to your child's interests and unique talents. Your desires to do the very best for your child can be realized.

It is my conviction that helping your children to use out-of-school time meaningfully is an investment in their future. Together you can make this time so relevant and rich that its effects will reverberate throughout your child's life. In the process making choices will not always be easy but I urge you to do so. As a parent you have many gifts to offer and I encourage you to do so during this special and magic period. I wish you and your child a wonderful period of life together. Write and tell me about it.

Joan M. Bergstrom
June, 1984



JANE SCHERK

A Child's Life Out of School

A BELL RINGS. Children everywhere spring from their desks and stream out of school. Where to? It is only mid-afternoon. The day is not nearly over. There is a long stretch of time until bed, and another stretch from waking up until the morning bell rings again. Then there are weekends and vacations. What does a child do with all that so-called free time? A certain amount of time has to be spent doing the essentials: eating, dressing, cleaning up, doing homework, doing chores. For most children, there is plenty of time left over, time that can be taken up by any of a thousand pastimes — reading, playing with friends, biking, skate boarding, watching television, practicing piano, or “messing around.” If you add up all of those minutes and hours of out-of-school time, you’ll discover that they comprise almost 80 percent of a child’s waking time in an average year.

Time Out of School Counts

Does it make any difference in the long run how children use these hours? The answer is a resounding yes. Children don't turn off their eyes, ears, and minds when the school bell sends them home. They continue to learn. Those hours out of school have a powerful influence on children's present and future lives, and whether that influence is positive or negative will depend on the quality of the experience.

School, of course, defines an important part of a child's day. Some people might consider school the central fact of a child's life, and all other time just filler. But school was never intended to "do it all." In fact, there are reasons to believe that children's out-of-school hours may actually be even more significant than their in-school hours. For example, children's out-of-school lives seem to have a direct bearing on how children perform in school. Moreover, the effects go far beyond the immediate. The way this time is spent each day, week, month, and year influences not only the child's life, but also his or her life as an adolescent and adult. A child's time out of school is the essential fabric of childhood and the underpinning of adult life.

Out-of-school time is one of the most precious commodities in the life of every child. This book is based upon the conviction that every child between the ages of six and twelve needs to spend some of that time developing special interests and skills. Depending on a child's age and strengths, the minimum amount of time a child should spend in planned or organized activities is three to six or perhaps seven hours a week. These activities must be meaningful to the child; they cannot merely fill time. The activities should be carefully chosen on the basis of the child's own inclinations, and should provide a clear enough structure that they help the child develop a sense of competence, self-esteem, and pride in his or her achievement. Every child needs the chance to become good at something.

Children this age also need to focus on the development of independence, or the *other 3 Rs*: resourcefulness, responsibility,

and reliability. These *other 3 Rs* are especially important in out-of-school life. In school, a great deal of structure is provided by the schedule, the calendar, the adults, and the academic goals of the school. Out-of-school life is much more open-ended, and it is the ideal proving ground for children's mastery of their own interests. Families need to devise strategies for helping children to become more resourceful and reliable. During these years children can gradually assume more and more responsibility for carrying out the activities they choose to do out of school. To develop independence, children need to be taught to do things on their own, to accept appropriate responsibility, and to use free time creatively. But children acquire a sense of responsibility in small increments, and premature granting of too much responsibility robs them of their childhood.

This book is based on a profound confidence in parents' capacity to find and arrange a satisfying out-of-school life for their children and on their desire to help their children develop responsibility and independence. Parents don't necessarily have to be with their children physically every hour of the time to insure that their children have meaningful experiences. In fact, most parents are very busy, and have limited time and resources, and this book appreciates that reality. Information and ideas are provided to help busy parents think consciously and explicitly about out-of-school time, and make appropriate plans and preparations.

Furthermore, this book can be a starting point for all parents and educators, and for all those concerned with children who are between the ages of six and twelve. It will help parents who are home and parents who work outside the home, full-time or part-time. It is not only for traditional families, but also for single-parent families, and for extended or reconstituted families. It will help parents understand the importance of children's out-of-school time, whether the child is in a formal after-school program, comes home and spends some time alone, has a consistent sitter, goes to a special friend's house, or is involved in a combination of arrange-

ments. Parents can then share these insights with other significant people in a child's life — a sitter, a coach, a step-parent, a grandparent, or a friend.

There are enormous pressures on American families today, and it is not easy to cope with them. Yet, the years of middle childhood are such a vitally important time in human life, that adults *must* take responsibility for helping children make good use of them. Sometimes people feel that when adults help children plan their out-of-school time they are being "pushy." This need not be true; parents can learn to strike a delicate balance between demanding too much and providing too little.

Play — A Part of Every Day

*... And as I was green and carefree, famous among the barns
About the happy yard and singing as the farm was home,
In the sun that is young once only,
Time let me play and be
Golden in the mercy of his means,
And green and golden I was huntsman and herdsman, the calves
Sang to my horn, the foxes on the hills barked clear and cold,
And the sabbath rang slowly
In the pebbles of the holy streams.¹*

"Fern Hill"

by Dylan Thomas

Dylan Thomas's lyric celebration of childhood captures a sense of freedom and gladness in a time when he could "play and be." All children need this time to play and be.

Children need ample chances for that time-honored activity, "going outside to play." Time for daydreaming, dressing up, getting into mischief, talking to one's self, playing in a brook, and time for messing around and doing nothing is at the very heart of childhood. For children six to twelve, play provides opportunities to develop and perfect skills, to rehearse future behaviors, and to



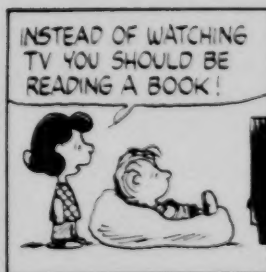
ROBERT KAMIN

solve problems. When children are playing, they are in control. While parents may look on approvingly as their children practice or study or finish an educational project, they may not recognize that play also allows a child to blossom. Children are constantly learning and testing their skills as they roller-skate, play kickball, shoot baskets, and make things out of paper, glue, wood, and fabric. Play and playthings encourage mastery.

In dramatic play, children this age reconstruct everyday life in their own way. With their friends, they dramatize familiar events using dolls or space creatures and characters. Children also love playing board games like Monopoly with friends. Such games intrigue them because they need to master and understand complicated rules. Even when they are telling jokes, playing tricks, filling water balloons, and just acting silly, children are making good use of their time.

It is, in fact, nearly impossible to articulate all the benefits and values of play. A city block swarming with children on a hot summer afternoon is filled with examples of children's ingenuity and creativity. Two children sitting on a stoop are playing "Spit." On the sidewalk, four girls are jumping rope and chanting street songs, and on the corner others are squirting one another with a hose. All of these children are having pure fun, seizing the moment, learning how to be friends, exercising, understanding what makes a good sport, and experiencing their neighborhood. Play is a natural and spontaneous activity for children, and learning is the inevitable result.

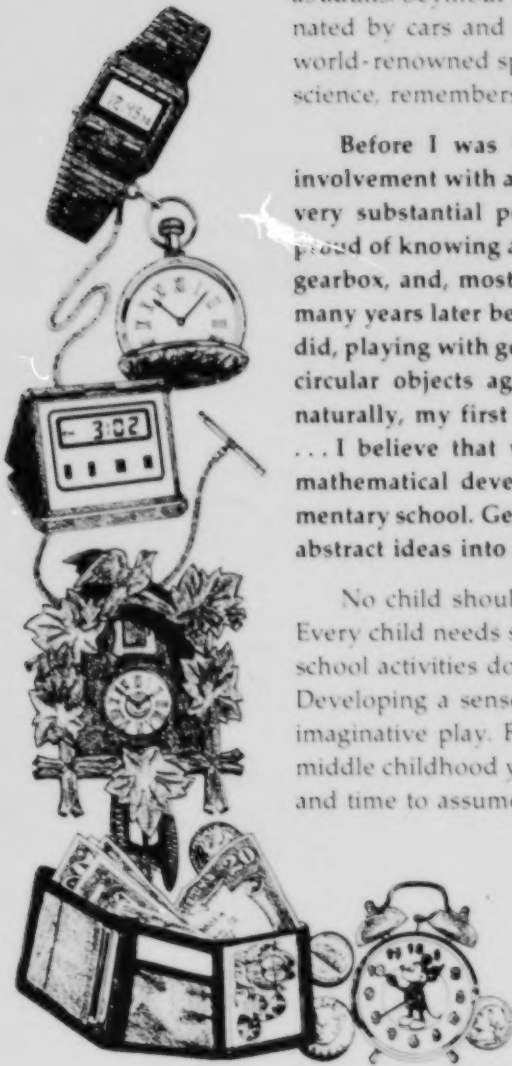
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Children's play with objects and materials is also rewarding in itself and teaches concepts which may influence their creativity as adults. Seymour Papert, for example, was a child who was fascinated by cars and mechanical construction materials. Papert, a world-renowned specialist in artificial intelligence and computer science, remembers vividly the quality of his childhood play.

Before I was two years old I had developed an intense involvement with automobiles. The names of car parts made up a very substantial portion of my vocabulary. I was particularly proud of knowing about the parts of the transmission system, the gearbox, and, most especially, the differential. It was, of course, many years later before I understood how gears work; but once I did, playing with gears became a favorite pastime. I loved rotating circular objects against one another in gearlike motions and, naturally, my first 'erector set' project was a crude gear system ... I believe that working with differentials did more for my mathematical development than anything I was taught in elementary school. Gears, serving as models, carried many otherwise abstract ideas into my head.²

No child should be denied the opportunity of time to play. Every child needs some unstructured time. But planning out-of-school activities does not deprive children of spontaneous play. Developing a sense of responsibility will not eliminate time for imaginative play. For most children, there is lots of time in the middle childhood years: time for play, time for planned activities, and time to assume more independence.



Time Fills a Child's Wallet

The use of out-of-school time has powerful repercussions, and it is naive to dismiss it simply as "free time." It is actually more appropriate to think of free time as the child's most precious commodity. If one compares this time to currency, the point comes clear. Time fills a child's wallet; it is the currency that a child has to spend.

Obviously, children do not all have identical advantages of health, education, housing, money, social experiences, and access to the world. Yet, in one way, they have exactly the same resource: they all have the same amount of time in middle childhood. Across all social classes, children have the same number of hours to be eight years old. Time is the great equalizer. What children do with their time makes them different from one another. A child who is helped to make productive use of his or her time has received one of the greatest advantages parents can bestow.

Parents have a profound influence on how children's time is spent, and can monitor the experiences they want for their children. With their understanding of how quickly time passes, parents can make the decision that childhood time will not be wasted. As one mother said, "I didn't want my daughter to look back and say, 'I didn't do much as a kid.' And I didn't want the years to slip away, and to think later, 'Oops, we missed our chance.'"

Sociologist Elliott Medrich has developed the analogy between time and money in a very complete way. He shows that the use of children's time can be compared to "patterns of consumption." He argues that parents' decisions about how children spend this precious resource reveal family values, priorities, and aspirations.³ Furthermore, Medrich points out that children's time, like money for most of us, is a finite resource; their limited number of out-of-school hours are analogous to a "fixed sum resource."⁴ There is only a certain amount of time that is available to be spent.

The analogy between children's time and currency suggests implications for planning children's time. Most parents encourage

children not to squander their money, but to spend it wisely on things that matter. Children's time should be viewed no differently. Parents should encourage children to spend their out-of-school time inventively, enjoyably, and wisely. Helping children treasure this time is a way that parents express their love and honor their children's desires.



Children are so eager to learn and to excel that at some time in this period, parents must seize the opportunity to help their children choose something where they can become really good. During these years, children need to have approximately three to six hours a week spent in activities which help them develop specific skills. This time can be divided in various ways, and probably the most common is for parents to "buy" a Renaissance experience for their children, helping them to engage in two or more activities in each season. Choices may include playing baseball and soccer, taking clarinet lessons, attending Cub Scouts, learning tie-dye, and building an end table. A rare but important exception to this rule is the child whose talent and interest in a particular area are so powerful that one activity becomes the child's main focus. This most often occurs with children interested in a musical instrument, dance, drama, or certain sports. Sometimes a child may want to focus absolutely on one activity, like competitive swimming. Such intensity about this one activity makes it clear that this is a child who should not have a "Renaissance" approach to out-of-school time. The symptoms are clear: the child eagerly gets up early in the morning, willingly puts in long hours practicing, jumps into a cold pool almost without complaining, and talks constantly about his or her coach. A perceptive parent realizes that for this child, other activities are a nuisance, a distraction. Instead, the parents support the child through daily workouts, special sessions with the coach, traveling to meets, and involvement with other swimmers and their families. No one could possibly "make" a child care so intensely about competitive swimming; probably, no one should try.

Years of Opportunity — What We Know about Children Six to Twelve

The years of childhood between the ages of six and twelve are a relatively quiescent period, wedged between the rapid growth of the preschool years and the dramatic experience of adolescence. Consequently, this span of life has received very little attention. However, these years are rich with possibilities. They are the time when the critical foundation is laid for adolescence and beyond. During these years children learn to interpret the world. When children reach the age of six they are receptive; their eagerness and ability to learn are at a high level. But the clock is ticking. As children leave this stage, their thoughts turn inward toward their own identities, and their receptivity to new experiences is diminished. These six years, then, are to be treasured.

In middle childhood, children have chunks of time (remember almost 80 percent of a year's waking hours is spent outside of school). They are also eager to learn, and the combination of relative freedom and receptivity turns these years into a special window for learning. These variables will never be combined in exactly this way again in a person's life. Hence, middle childhood is the parent's chance to introduce the world, instill values, and encourage the development of skills and life-long interests. How this time is used, managed, and valued is critical.

Human development theory can offer insights to help parents make intelligent decisions about their children's out-of-school time. Human development literature describes children between six and twelve as active learners, explorers, discoverers, inventors, experimenters, and doers. With passionate intensity, children try to take in new information about the world, to grasp rules of society, to make sense of people's behavior, relationships to time and distance, and their own relationship to the world.

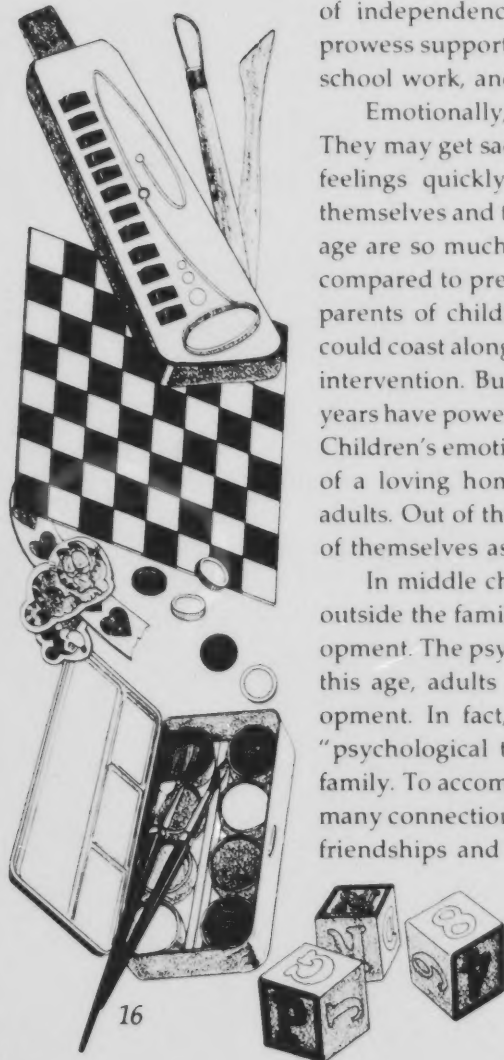
It is true that within the broad outlines of development in this period, there is tremendous variety in the actual behavior and

temperament of individual children, in their energy levels and attention spans, in their personalities and interests. There are also major developmental changes that take place during these years, so that a six-year-old is very different from a nine-year-old, and a nine-year-old is different from a twelve-year-old. However, there are some constant themes throughout middle childhood.

Physically, school-aged children play vigorously in ball games, two-square, running, jumping, gymnastics, and other sports. Their development of motor skills gives children a growing sense of independence and self-esteem. Their developing physical prowess supports children's feelings of satisfaction in friendships, school work, and exploring new activities.

Emotionally, children in this age group seem rather resilient. They may get sad, upset, or angry, but they usually get over these feelings quickly. They seem to have resources for consoling themselves and their friends. Perhaps it is because children of this age are so much fun for adults to be with that they seem "easy" compared to preschoolers and adolescents. This may also be why parents of children six to twelve have sometimes felt that they could coast along, letting children grow up without much parental intervention. But perceptive parents know that children in these years have powerful needs for responsible adult care and guidance. Children's emotional health depends upon the continuing security of a loving home-base and the caring guidance of concerned adults. Out of this climate, children begin to construct their sense of themselves as competent, responsible, and valued people.⁵

In middle childhood, the child's world broadens, and people outside the family also have a profound influence on their development. The psychoanalyst Erik Erikson explains that for children this age, adults beyond the immediate family can affect development. In fact, middle childhood is the time when a child's "psychological task" is to work on separation from home and family. To accomplish this separation, children naturally establish many connections outside the family. They make commitments to friendships and to groups, using games, sports, and hobbies to



transfer some of their attachment from home to the outside world. They become deeply involved in specific activities like sports, playing music, or working with materials. The actions and efforts of numerous significant adults in a child's life can either enhance or counteract the influence of parents, for either good or ill.

The world outside of school is filled with adults with whom children can become friends. Frequently, children begin a pursuit because an influential adult — a parent, grandparent, relative, sitter, or friend — takes time to introduce them to an unknown area and then helps sustain the new interests.

Gretchen's grandfather had a farm two miles from her parents' house. From an early age, she helped in the barn. Starting when Gretchen was eleven, each spring her grandfather assigned her the responsibility for raising a calf. During the late summer, he would drive her to county fairs where she would show her animal, sometimes bringing home prize ribbons. At first, Gretchen seemed uninspired about farm work. But gradually she developed a real interest in animals. One November afternoon, as she was delivering milk to transplanted city folk nearby who were raising a calf, she noticed a broken window next to the animal, which caused a fierce draft. She knew that animals can tolerate cold, but not drafts. Too shy to mention this to her neighbors, she asked her grandfather to go down and urge that the window be repaired. Her grandfather, on the pretext of a friendly visit, did just that. Her grandfather's respect for Gretchen's judgment, evident in this incident and throughout her childhood, gave her a sustained feeling of competence. Gretchen is now in her third year of veterinary medicine school, specializing in the care of large animals, and one weekend a month she directs a 4-H club.

Under the gentle guidance of her grandfather, Gretchen learned about the science of farming. She was spared none of the unglamorous details of caring for animals, but her grandfather made her feel competent, and his support kindled an interest which evolved into a career.





RICHARD HOWARD, Boston Children's Museum

Socially, during these years, children intensely seek other children to make and develop friendships. Game playing is a favorite activity of children this age, and it becomes a way for children with common interests to get together. Some experts even call this the "gang period," for children are developing such strong ties among their peers. They often want to visit at each other's houses, see each other's rooms and outdoor spaces, play with one another's toys, spend the night together, and go places together. As the school-aged child interacts with friends and peers, the values learned in the family are being modified by other children and their values. These interactions provide the social context in which the child sorts out what the world is like and how he or she fits into it. Children are also learning to modify their own behavior in relation to other children when they realize that they are being too wild, or too pompous, or too silly, or too shy. They learn to recognize when they seem long-winded or self-righteous, and gradually they gauge and adjust their ways of talking and acting so that they make and keep friends.

Out of the world of many friends, children this age often develop especially strong and intense friendships with one or two other children. Around the age of nine, children begin to prefer spending time with one child who has similar interests or a congenial personality. Henry Stack Sullivan, a psychoanalyst and psychiatrist, describes preadolescence as a time when children have a need for interpersonal intimacy. He explains that children between eight-and-a-half and ten are often beginning to experience something different in their relationships, namely, they find a "chum." With the special chum or friend, the child develops a real sensitivity to what matters to others. As such friendships develop, children naturally begin to think about the ways that they can contribute to the happiness of someone else. They begin to seek ways to make the friend feel worthwhile.⁶ Sullivan argues that in preadolescence, children are developing the capacity to love. The interest in a chum Sullivan calls a "spectacular" development, something which has never happened before in the child's life.



With their friends, children achieve a new kind of closeness, sharing so many activities and confidences that they may even develop mutual daydreams. As they spend hours and hours together, they are creating a special imaginary world in which both children participate.

Another theme in the development of children between the ages of six and twelve is their tremendous capacity to learn.

Erikson states that "in all cultures, at this stage, children receive some systematic instruction."⁷ It is a universal developmental phenomenon that children in this age group have a driving need to learn. Erikson describes this as a force "with an energy of its own" which becomes a "fundamental lifelong striving."⁸

Children's cognitive growth proceeds at an enormous rate in this period, fueled by their burning curiosity and excitement about learning and exploring. Typically, children progress through a number of new cognitive achievements in a relatively short period of time. Reading opens new worlds to them, and they absorb astonishing amounts of factual information. They are talking constantly, describing scenes and people, telling interminable stories, recounting detailed information, and playing with their expanding vocabularies. Children between six and nine are fascinated by classifications and often seem to memorize vast systems of information (kinds of dinosaurs, Greek gods, or species of birds), while constantly sorting smaller bits of knowledge into categories. Daniel, an eight-year-old, looking out a window with binoculars, came out with a steady stream of observations, thoughts, and questions:

There's a katydid down there. Did you know that humming-birds can't walk? Hey! (using binoculars) I've got a nice, big, plump robin. (Puts binoculars down.) I wonder if it's raining in China. We could call the weather in China. I wish the scarlet tanagers would come back. They are so incredible! Mom, where's Arizona? Where's Wyoming? — wild and woolly and wacky Wyoming.

Children also become more and more able to weigh multiple variables in each decision, as any parent who has taken a ten-year-old to buy a pumpkin well knows. Even if the child has decided to buy a five- or six-pound pumpkin, lots of other questions remain in the child's mind. Would the round one be better than the squarish one? Would the biggest one be the best? Is this a reasonable price? Which one would be the easiest to carve?

As children develop problem solving skills to master varied kinds of situations, they also work on understanding time, space, distance, and relationships between the past and the future. Jean Piaget, a specialist in the development of children's thinking, explains that children seven to eleven or twelve years of age are in the "concrete operations" stage. At this stage, their thinking is reasonable and logical, especially regarding those things and events that are real and are known to them. They can be logical as long as they are thinking about something that is an integral part of their immediate world. They can attend to and understand many attributes of objects, events, and situations at once. Furthermore, they do not have to rely on what they see but are able to integrate what they know. Piaget concludes that children, in their relationships with other people, particularly with their peers, develop the capacity to take more than one point of view. They also begin to see cause and effect as they put old ideas into new relationships. For example, a seven-year-old begins to realize that if he doesn't provide the gerbil with water, food, and a consistent temperature, the pet could die. The child now understands that there are many conditions that influence the health and well-being of the gerbil.

As a result of seeing their children's problem solving skills develop so rapidly, parents may at times not realize that children's limited experience inhibits their flexibility in solving some problems. This means that when children are forced to confront new situations which contradict their past experiences, they sometimes have difficulty distinguishing between thought and reality in order to figure out a pathway through the unknown. Because of their age, they are often making decisions on limited information and cannot always alter their familiar perceptions of a situation to take into account the new and contradictory variables.⁹

Sandra is a child of eight who frequently lets herself into the house after school and has no apparent difficulty handling her afternoons. However, one winter day when she either forgot or

lost her house key, she couldn't remember what to do. She sat on the cold porch for about an hour and a half. Her mother received a phone call at work informing her that Sandra had not shown up at her after-school activity, an arts and crafts class, as she was expected to do. Her mother rushed to the school, and then home and found Sandra shivering on the porch. Sandra explained that the next-door neighbors were not home and she could not get into the house to get her money and supplies to go off to the art center.

In this same predicament, an older child might have gone to another neighbor's house or have walked a quarter of a mile to the nearest store where there was a public phone. The problem for Sandra was that she did not conceive of alternative pathways through the unexpected.

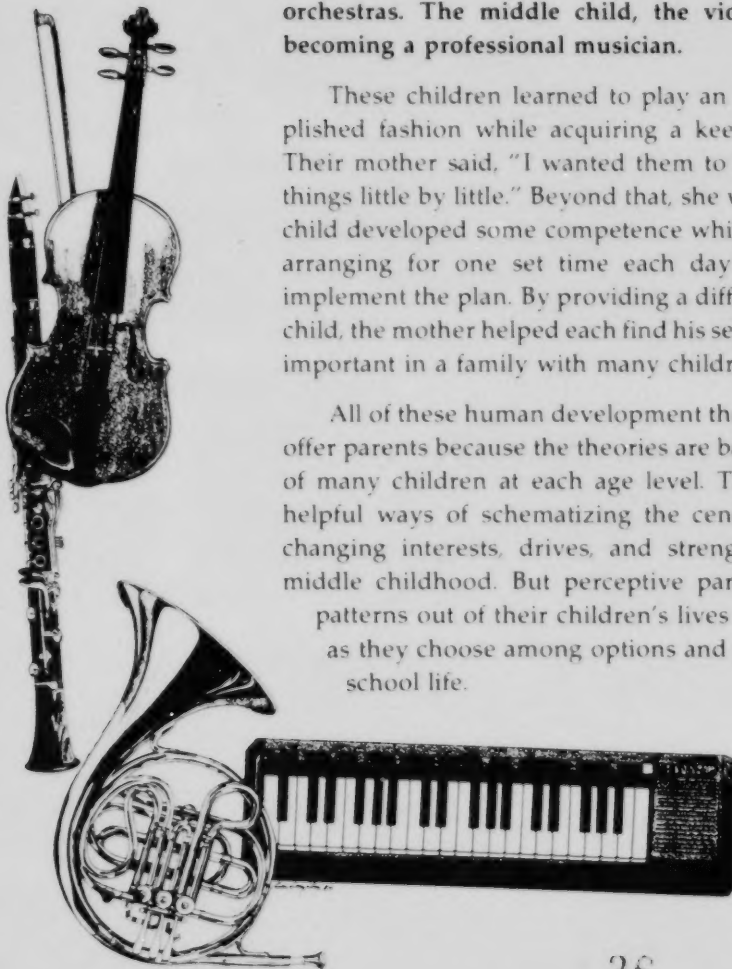
In middle childhood, children want to make things, do things, become "good," and master what they do. On this subject, Erikson explained that a healthy personality in children six to ten years old is built on the development of a "sense of industry." Erikson's term, "industry," refers to the enormous interest children this age have in learning how things work, constructing and building practical things, creating many different kinds of products — tree houses, puppets, model castles. Failure to acquire skills can lead to a feeling of inferiority. Erikson explains that children's sense of industry is supported when their efforts are encouraged. If they are allowed to finish their work and are praised or rewarded for their efforts, their natural inclination to feel pride in their activity and industry is enhanced. If parents see all this activity as simply a nuisance, "making a mess," or "getting into things," and if they do not allow children to finish their work, they encourage in them a sense of inferiority.

In one family, fifteen minutes set aside each day to practice music taught the children much more than how to play a musical instrument.

At 6:30 A.M., a house in a small California suburb was quiet with a sleeping family. At 6:45 A.M. a sudden fury of squawks and beeps came from the third floor where three young boys, eight, nine, and ten, the oldest in a family of five, were practicing their instruments. They seemed completely unaware of each other: one cradled a cello between his pajama-clad knees, the second held a clarinet half his size, and the third balanced a violin under a chin prominent with determination. At 7:00 A.M. the noise abruptly stopped, and the house resumed its uneventful entry into the day, filled with the usual sounds of children getting ready for school. For years, every day began in precisely that manner, as each child practiced in preparation for a weekly lesson. Today the children play chamber music together and with friends; two are in orchestras. The middle child, the violinist, is on his way to becoming a professional musician.

These children learned to play an instrument in an accomplished fashion while acquiring a keen appreciation of music. Their mother said, "I wanted them to know that you can learn things little by little." Beyond that, she wanted to make sure each child developed some competence while he was growing up. By arranging for one set time each day to practice, she helped implement the plan. By providing a different instrument for each child, the mother helped each find his separate niche — especially important in a family with many children.

All of these human development theories have a great deal to offer parents because the theories are based on close observation of many children at each age level. This information provides helpful ways of schematizing the central themes of children's changing interests, drives, and strengths as they go through middle childhood. But perceptive parents are always creating patterns out of their children's lives as they respond to them, as they choose among options and provide plans for out-of-school life.



Endless, Empty Afternoons

Out-of-school time is an asset that can slip away like coins through a ripped pocket. Unstructured and unproductive use of this time can result in overexposure to television, overeating, fighting with siblings, hanging around, physical inertia, fear, loneliness, and withdrawal. Children with little to do become locked in a state of "unemployment" and create problems for themselves, their families, and the community. The paths of three children illustrate how easy it is for out-of-school life to go slightly awry. Some may find these vignettes troubling or discomfiting, but they reflect real patterns. These three children are losing out on a phase of life that could be very rich, and the patterns they are establishing now are likely to have significant effects on their futures.

Consider one child who never learned to be accountable for his time:

Josh, age ten, attends a private school. His parents were delighted when he was accepted, and they placed a great deal of faith in the school's philosophy. They believe his day is always full and thus make no special plans for him after school. Josh has about a twenty-minute walk home through the historic neighborhoods of the city. Since fourth grade he has been spending a part of most afternoons "downtown." His mother assumes he comes right home. She is a part-time student with classes three afternoons a week; she frequently studies in the library until 5:00 or 5:30 P.M. Josh manages to arrive home just before she does, so she's not aware that he often loiters in town. Josh spends a great deal of psychological energy planning whom he'll invite along each afternoon, what he'll do, and what he'll tell his mother if he gets home after she does. Sometimes Josh just "hangs out" downtown. He buys something to eat and reads in the bookstore. Once he forgot and walked out of the store with a comic book. Sometimes



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he plays with the dogs that are tied to the parking meters. When he has enough money he goes to electronic game parlors and plays. Even if he doesn't have money he goes and watches. Sometimes, when the salespeople are too rushed to notice, he spends time in a computer store and plays with some of the software. Josh told some of his friends that he once hid some candy in his mitten when leaving the drugstore and nobody caught him. Two of Josh's friends told their mothers about the candy incident, and now their mothers won't let them go downtown with him.

Children this age love the independence and adventure of wandering around stores. It's exciting. Josh, however, is spending far too much time without supervision or direction. He began making friends with some of the neighborhood boys who hang around the game parlors. Josh finds them impressive and tries to imitate their speech and dress. It is easy to envision ways that Josh could get sidetracked into problem situations. What started as a harmless case of childhood curiosity could easily deteriorate into something else.

Consider next a child who must account for her whereabouts, but is trapped by limited horizons:

Nine-year-old Colleen and her mother have never made specific decisions about what Colleen will do during the afternoon hours before her mother arrives home from work. She is left to her own resources and does the same thing each day — nothing. Her life out of school has little, if any, sense of purpose. Colleen lives on a quiet residential street and lets herself into the apartment every afternoon. The breakfast dishes are inevitably stacked in the sink. Often she munches on chips or cookies before calling her mother to say she is safely home. Colleen's mother tells her she can't play next door until she cleans her room. Colleen decides not to tell her mother that she has forgotten her homework assignment at school. After she hangs up, she looks at her room strewn with clothes and toys, but doesn't know where to begin. She retreats to the living room, turns on the television, and watches the soap operas. And so most every day passes with Colleen turning inward more and more. When she hears her mother arriving, she races to her room and begins making her bed, braced for the argument that will certainly follow.

Colleen's mother is a parent who must work for economic reasons; she is pressured and busy. One of her major concerns is to have Colleen safe at home without having to worry about her daughter's whereabouts. Beyond that, she really hasn't focused on how her daughter should spend her time in terms of responsibility for the household, learning new skills, or following through on her schoolwork. This time doesn't exist in her mother's consciousness. Consequently Colleen views afternoons as boring, depressing, and never-ending. For her, this expanse of time implies "nothing to do." She and her mother are developing a pattern of antagonism. Months of lethargy, with few opportunities and little encouragement to learn new skills, no structure and no sense of accomplishment, establish a pattern of behavior that could easily persist into Colleen's adult life.

Consider a third child who is a victim of a pattern of incompleteness in out-of-school life:



Amy is a child with intelligence, good looks, and many natural talents. When she was seven, her father signed her up for group figure skating lessons at the community skating rink. Within six months her progress was so great that the teacher suggested she consider private lessons. Her father bought her a skating dress and \$100 figure skates. When she was eight, Amy suddenly decided to stop her skating lessons — she wanted to take piano lessons. Her family bought an upright piano, and she began studying with the neighborhood teacher. Again she demonstrated remarkable talent. While her friends were picking out tunes with three fingers from Book One, Amy was already on Book Three. She sat down at the keyboard and played chords with ease. The next year her best friend took ballet, and so Amy decided she would like to try that, too. Six months later she quit ballet and returned to the piano. The following year she stopped piano again, and then thought she might take up photography. Amy's family bought her a 35mm camera with special lenses and attachments. Amy's parents always left it up to the child to make decisions about what she'd like to pursue.

Amy is a child blessed with many natural abilities. But she only dabbled in activities without pursuing any to a higher level. Perhaps the activities were simply the wrong match for her personality, but it seems that whenever Amy reached a plateau, she gave up. Could something have been done so that today she would be an accomplished skater, pianist, or photographer? Amy's parents were obviously trying to do their best for their child, yet all of these experiences imply a lesson that persistence does not matter.

In looking at the pattern of Amy's out-of-school life, there is some cause for concern. She has not followed through with any pursuit; she has not persevered beyond the first flush of attempting to master a new skill. Learning any skill is a cumulative experience. Mastery and a positive self-image grow simultaneously. There seem to have been no agreements with her family to

commit herself to an activity for a prescribed amount of time. Mastery is essential for continuing growth through adolescence and adulthood. When progress toward mastery is interrupted, it damages a child's self-esteem. Amy is a child with great promise who has established a cycle of incompleteness which may be hard to break; the cycle, rather than the missed opportunities for achievement is the frightening part.

During their hours away from school, children like Josh, Colleen, and Amy have the freedom to pursue a vast number of skills, interests, and inclinations. These children could be helped to use this time more creatively. Out-of-school time belongs to children, but parents must guide children to insure that it is used well.

Making Out-of-School Time Count

Now consider four other families in which children's and parents' needs and interests are successfully combined. All of these families worked with some constraints and difficulties, but they figured out ways to support children's strengths through middle childhood.

The lives of some children contain essential service to their own families, help for certain hours on certain days on which the family depends. When such children's own interests are also honored, they can assume responsibility at home with good grace and self-respect.

Since the third grade, Paul's after-school routine has been similar. Three days a week he returns home at 3:30 P.M.; the other two days of the week he attends an after-school program where he is involved in creative activities that he loves. Mime is one of his favorite activities. On the three days he comes straight home, Paul calls his mother at work, gets a snack, reads, takes care of his bird, and at 4:30 P.M., he goes outside to wait for his sister who is dropped off from her day care center. He supervises her until his mother arrives home around 5:15 P.M.; then he is free to pursue

his interests. He loves to read, and he loves to play basketball. One evening a week Paul and his father go to the library. On another evening, Paul's father takes him to play basketball at the community center. About once a month, Paul signs up for a full-day basketball clinic. Paul's mother occasionally permits Paul to alternate his afternoon plans. But Paul understands his working parents depend on him and his work three afternoons a week.

Three of Paul's afternoons teach him responsibility. The other two afternoons are organized around his interests. His mother selected her job so she could work near home, which gives Paul an increased sense of security on the days that he has to take care of his sister Sarah. He has learned that by caring for his sister, he is contributing to the well-being of the family. Some people believe Paul is expected to do too much at home, but the manner in which his after-school time is organized works well for him. He is rewarded by the appreciation of his parents, whom he wants to please; he has adequate time to play with his peers and also to do the things he prefers. Perhaps most important is Paul's understanding that his responsibility for his sister is a needed and essential part of his family's life.

Another child, Jessica, discovered that she excelled at one activity and became eager to spend more of her time at it. Her interests had an effect on the entire family's schedule and plans.

At seven years of age, Jessica was involved in several organized activities. In addition to piano and religious education classes, she took gymnastics. She started gymnastics lessons at a local studio, and after one year's study, it was apparent that she was an unusually talented athlete. She learned the basics in the noncompetitive atmosphere of the studio, but she wanted to grow beyond what this facility could offer. Joining a competitive gymnastics team appealed to Jessica. Jessica's instructor at the local studio recommended that she take lessons from a particular coach at a center about twenty miles away which had a reputation



JANE SCHERR

for excellence. Jessica thrived on competition with other teams and welcomed the opportunities to learn through practice sessions and competitions. She went on to win at a number of meets. The experience, while positive for Jessica, involved real sacrifice on the part of the family. However, her parents were willing to make the half-hour ride to and from the center three times per week.

Jessica, who is now ten, still loves gymnastics and talks about all the things she can do. Her parents have found ways to accommodate and support her burning interest. They do feel, though, that they need to curtail Jessica's involvement in other activities. They recognize that she does not have much free time to go out and play.

Taking a child to a workplace on a regular basis might seem to be one of life's more hectic enterprises. However, incorporating children into the world of work while allowing them to pursue their own interests can enrich the children's lives.

By the time Daniel was eleven he was a veteran of the Boston subway system. Daniel's father was an editor, and his mother a teacher at a small business college. Their offices were within five city blocks of each other. At three, Daniel had started traveling to their places of work with a sitter after preschool. By the time he was nine, he had learned to travel to his parents' offices alone after school. Now, at eleven, Daniel goes to his mother's office three afternoons a week, and the other two days he does something different. One of those afternoons he attends a group tennis class and clinic. Daniel has a friend from school who goes to tennis with him. On another afternoon, Daniel is involved with photography and is getting proficient in developing and printing his own film and prints. He is "streetwise," and knows how to use the subway system. Daniel has also learned to entertain himself at both parents' places of work. He easily strikes up conversations with his parents' co-workers; his self-confidence is evident. When he is at his mother's office, he is now likely to finish his homework and then play "Adventure" on one of the school's microcomputers. He also spends time writing short stories, and has been learning to master the word processing software.

By going through the afternoon routine with each parent, Daniel learned what his parents did and felt more a part of their working lives. Daniel is also able to pursue his specific interests of tennis and photography, and with tennis a friend is involved. By regularly integrating Daniel into the world of work, his family has influenced the ways he uses out-of-school time, but still his emerging interests have been supported.

Still another family came up with a solution for shaping their two children's out-of-school time by involving another adult.

Phyllis works three days a week as a computer programmer for an insurance company, and she wanted a child-centered and home-based afternoon for her children, Matt, age five, and Wendy, nine. She was limited by financial considerations because her husband had decided to go back to school. She was also limited by the fact that her children were several years apart in age and had very different needs and interests. Her solution was to find a particularly resourceful and dynamic babysitter whom she paid well. Paulina was studying to be a nutritionist and had blocks of time available in the afternoon. Right after Phyllis hired Paulina, they sat down with Wendy and worked out an inventive schedule that made use of Paulina's skills and delighted Matt and Wendy as well.

Each day Paulina would pick up Matt at kindergarten at noon, give him lunch, and play with him. At 2:30 P.M., Wendy would come home, and Paulina turned her attention to her. On Monday, the three planned, shopped for, and cooked the evening meal together. On Tuesday, Paulina and Wendy spent thirty minutes working on conversational Spanish (which they also practiced on the other days), learning simple phrases and vocabulary, and entering all new material in a special notebook. On Wednesday, Paulina, Wendy, and Matt all went to the rink and took group roller skating lessons together. On that evening, Wendy's parents took her to a flute lesson. Paulina and Phyllis reviewed the weekly routine over the phone each Sunday.

Knowing that her children have busy, interesting, and varied afternoons when she is working relieves Phyllis of the pressure to cram in many activities for Matt and Wendy when she is at home. On the two afternoons she is home, she and her children are free to choose what they would like to do as the mood strikes, not as guilt would have it.

In contrast to Josh, Colleen, and Amy, the children who were described earlier, Paul, Jessica, Daniel, Matt and Wendy have parents who knew that their time is a resource not to be wasted or

squandered on TV or hours of doing nothing. The parents designed the time to help their children gain independence, a sense of responsibility, and some specific skills. They took positive steps to give some order to their children's "free" time, creating situations in which they could grow and achieve as they enjoyed their childhoods.

These vignettes suggest that planning some out-of-school activities for children provided them with skills that they would not have otherwise attained. In fact, some of these childhood experiences may have an enduring, even life-long, influence on who these children become. All children need help from adults in using this time; all need to use this time to develop a feeling of pride, accomplishment, and purposefulness. In some of these stories, children's endeavors enabled them to express their own individuality so that they achieved a distinction which made them interesting to their peers and adults while giving them self-confidence.

These vignettes also suggest that for parents to create a rich and supportive environment for their children, they need not make expensive or complicated arrangements. Nor does planning imply that parents are imposing their ambitions on their children. Out of the child's own personality must come the directions. But the parents can provide a structure within which a child's individuality can flower. Ironically, parents' planning for children may actually provide them with more freedom than if there is nothing planned at all, for within the planned activities, children will meet new people, have new experiences, develop new talents, and glimpse new possibilities. It is out of structure that true freedom for children becomes a reality!



Chapter 1 Footnotes

1. Dylan Thomas, "Fern Hill," *Poems of Dylan Thomas*. Copyright 1945 by the trustees for the Copyrights of Dylan Thomas. Reprinted by permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation, ii, pp. 10-18.
2. Seymour Papert, *Mindstorms: Children, Computers, and Powerful Ideas*. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1980, p. vi.
3. Elliott A. Medrich, "The Serious Business of Growing Up: A Study of Children's Lives Outside of School." Berkeley: University of California, Childrens Time Study, Winter 1977, p. 3.
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6. Harry Stack Sullivan, *The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1953, p. 245.
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JON GOELL, Boston Children's Museum

CHAPTER TWO

Parents' Roles and Special Insights

Tuning In to Your Child's Interests

AERICAN CULTURE has not really supported parents to the extent it should have to respect their own instincts and thoughts regarding their children. Parents need to feel empowered to go with their intuitive understandings and knowledge. Typically, advice to parents on child rearing has emphasized quick solutions to problems — how to have a brighter child, how to teach your child to swim, how to make your child physically fit, and even how to make your child a genius. The image of the “Super Mother” is of one who is frequently chauffeuring children to activities yet still manages “to balance her multiple roles.” The image of the “Perfect Father” is of one who is nurturing, is able to meet everyone’s needs

and has fatherhood as a top priority. Almost never are parents encouraged to sit and watch a child engaged in play or work alone or with other children, and to reflect upon the developing patterns of thought that their child is demonstrating.

Nor are parents encouraged to engage in focused conversation with their children to seek out their authentic interests. Little attention is paid to helping parents to discover and acknowledge the connections between their own childhoods and the ways they are shaping their children's childhoods. Nor are parents assisted in identifying and articulating their values as these values influence child rearing.

But out of quiet, reflective, and observant moments, out of recollections, conversations, observations, and articulation of values, parents can develop out-of-school plans which respect their children's individuality and interests. This more organic way of creating plans for children ends up taking no more time than imposed programming, but provides much more satisfaction to both parents and children.

The very act of trying to understand children — watching, listening, and interrogating them — gives parents detailed and precise knowledge. It requires an enormous mental leap to grasp another person's point of view — especially the point of view of a child whose thinking really is different from an adult's. Parents who try to make the leap are to be commended.

Children's out-of-school time appears to be an emotionally charged subject. Parents and children are grappling with questions about what to do and what not to do. These struggles are often complicated by parents' emotional attachments to or rejection of their own childhood patterns, coupled with their own ambitions for their children. There is sometimes a polarization between individuals, even within families, about what they think children should or should not be doing. One parent said, "The whole subject sends chills down my spine." Another said, "I get nervous just thinking about it." Why? Parents feel guilty that they are not doing enough or that they are doing too much, or that they

simply don't know what to do. Some even feel uneasy intruding upon the natural flow of childhood experiences. In addition, we all have images of the "perfect parents," and think we can't possibly measure up to that image.

By the time children reach middle childhood, parents have already done a great deal for them, but they are now embarking on a period which demands new decisions. Even though middle childhood *does* demand new decisions of parents, you do not need to feel overwhelmed. Trust yourself. No one knows your child better than you do. Your instincts about what will work are sound and trustworthy.

Intuitions — Trust Them

Much that parents do is intuitive, spurred on by love for their children and a desire for them to have a rich, enjoyable, and productive childhood. Parents do not necessarily realize what they are, in fact, providing for their children. They just act. Parents now have had years of experience with each child, they know how to interpret their children's behavior, the signs of happiness, excitement, eagerness, frustration, fatigue, overstimulation, loneliness, and boredom. Parents therefore have reliable intuitions about what will work with each child.

Parents' intuitions constantly influence children's daily lives. In the most ordinary, routine ways, in their subtle, unplanned behavior, parents establish the chemistry of the household. In the midst of fixing dinner, a parent can help one child learn math facts, or, with the promise of a Sunday outing, a father can galvanize several children to do a complicated house cleaning project or solve the problem of when a friend can spend the night. Parents may not always consciously recognize the many natural, offhand ways they offer involvement and understanding to their children. But even the busiest working parents find "pockets of time" in which they make contact with their children's deepest interests.

Human nature is such that perfection seldom reigns. Both children and parents get tired and exasperated at times. What



BONNIE KAMIN

begins as a great idea sometimes gets waylaid; what was intended to be a marvelous new lesson or activity gets scrapped by ill-humor or gets snagged. However, nearly all parents have some wonderful ordinary moments with their children. In fact, many of the things parents want for their children are accomplished in everyday activities out of school.

A large cardboard box can provide marvelous entertainment for children, but when confronted with one, a parent's first reaction may be how to get rid of it.

When the Sterlings purchased a new refrigerator, their two sons took the giant box it had come in and turned it into a clubhouse. They put it in the backyard, and soon four other neighborhood children were involved in cutting windows and painting the box. The Sterling boys and their friends used it for a week, devising secret codes, embellishing the clubhouse inside and out, and developing a continuous story which centered on their clubhouse/fort/headquarters.

The entire neighborhood came alive the week the carton was in the Sterling's back yard because of the parents' acceptance, flexibility, and willingness to let their children have the box. Children who hadn't played together for months came out of the woodwork. They became involved in teamwork, creative planning,

dramatization, and decorating. The clubhouse initiated new friendships for each child.

When children are alone and unpressured, their imaginative life can flourish. Parents who recognize a child's need to play alone can create an environment which allows it to happen.

Ryan is ten years old and a dreamer, schemer, and fantasizer. His room is filled with Lego constructions and masses of green and red soldiers. Sometimes Ryan reconstructs skirmishes between the "Yanks" and the "Redcoats." Other times he seems to be recreating the Battle of Midway. If Ryan's mother is passing by his room, she hears her son making eerily realistic airplane and artillery sounds as he's narrating some action. Ryan's older brothers are always asking him to recount his latest military maneuver. Ryan also has a collection of trolls which he arranges and re-arranges in a labyrinth of rooms he set up in his closet. He spends many hours making small detailed drawings of artillery pieces and other military hardware.

The Bordens are very accepting of Ryan's rich imaginative life. As a child, Mrs. Borden was much the same; she spent hours alone in the woods behind her house pretending she was an orphan. She has noticed that if Ryan is too busy with school work and other activities, he becomes edgy and ill-humored. Therefore, Mrs. Borden attempts to ensure that Ryan has enough time to himself. She is unsure of the exact meaning of all his projects, but she knows playing in this way is a necessary passion for him.

Most parents act almost instinctively, as the Bordens do, to create a hospitable climate for each child. They act on hunches and intuitions about how to forestall tension or promote each child's feelings of freedom and productivity.

The chart, *A Portrait of My Child*, provides an opportunity for you as a parent to describe your child. It will reveal that you already intuitively know a great deal about your child. Thinking about these questions will help you describe your child's temperament, needs, strengths, and aspirations.



A Portrait of My Child

1. How would you describe your child's temperament and what are your child's strengths?
2. Do you have a sense that your child is an interesting person?
3. What activities does your child enjoy the most?
4. Does your child seem to have enough to do out of school? Does your child seem to have too much to do out of school? What should be added or eliminated?
5. What are the low points in the day and in the year for your child? Why?
6. Was there anything in the last year that appeared to be a painful or negative experience for your child? Are there any lessons that can be drawn from it?
7. In what area do you think your child needs the most help? Is there anything you can do about it?
8. Has your child become involved with something because of a friend? Is it turning out to be a good experience for your child?
9. As the seasons change, do you think your child is satisfied with the activities that go along with each one? If given the choice, how do you suppose your child would alter things as the seasons change?
10. In your opinion, does your child watch too much TV? Is it when the child is bored, needs something to do, has a favorite program, or needs a release?

Recollections

Most parents both consciously and unconsciously attempt to structure their children's middle childhood to provide what they most appreciated in their own upbringing, and to avoid repeating what they see as their own parents' errors or disasters! Reflecting on your own childhood can help you in two ways. Remembering what it felt like to be a child can give you a new, textured, reflective empathy for your children. It may also shed light upon your own child rearing practices.

Most people have only a few blurred memories of the years before they were six or seven, but from that time on, adults can tell dozens of stories, rich in detail, about what they did — played horse and bandit with the neighborhood children, made a doll house with intricate furniture and humorous little people, picked and canned blueberries, entered and won a pie baking contest or played baseball in the town Little League. Adults also have stories about where they lived, what they liked, what was fun, and what was horrible. For most adults whose childhoods were reasonably happy, the memories of middle childhood are notable for their variety, humor, and precision.



JANE SCHERR

These questions may help you remember middle childhood, and you might enjoy sharing the answers with your children.

Remembering Middle Childhood

1. What did you like to do best when you were out of school?
2. What are your fondest memories of things you did outside of school?
3. What did you dislike the most that you had to do out of school?
4. Are there any activities you enjoyed then that you still enjoy today?
5. Who got you started in that activity and when? If you hadn't gotten started in it at that age, do you think you would be pursuing it today?
6. How have your childhood experiences influenced your child rearing?

Ralph, a forty-year-old father of two children, described his own childhood as singularly happy, and explained how his memories influence the decisions he makes for his son. He is attempting to recapture the emotional climate of his childhood for them, rather than the specific activities he enjoyed.

Around the time I turned six, my family moved to a very secure neighborhood on a lake. I loved all kinds of water sports and outdoor activities, and I had lots of friends who lived all around the lake. My parents always treated me as responsible; most afternoons I would just tell my mother where I was going and that I'd be home for dinner. I always went home the minute the street lights went on. No matter what the activity was, I

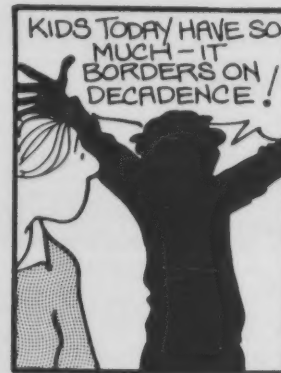
relished the fact that I was treated with so much trust. My parents had clear rules about water safety, and we weren't allowed to swim or go boating without an adult. They knew I really stuck to the rules. The way my childhood influences me now is that I try to keep my son, who is now eight, from being overly scheduled so he'll have plenty of free time. I loved out-of-school time; it was in school that I felt stifled as a kid.

Mary, the mother of five boys (including ten-year-old twins, and sons eight, three, and two years old), has vivid and humorous memories of herself as a child. She lived near a community center and signed up for all their children's arts and crafts classes. She was a whiz with materials, and could turn acorns and pipe cleaners into little gnomes, make tiny stuffed mice decorated with crowns and necklaces, and construct stalls and barns for her miniature horse collection. Her fascination with creating little people and creatures was recognized by her parents as a true creative gift, and they encouraged her by providing plenty of materials for her to use.

I feel very strongly that my childhood interests *have* carried over into adulthood. I still love all kinds of zany and whimsical crafts projects — like making Christmas stockings or crazy table decorations or funny Halloween costumes for my kids. And one of my two oldest boys is also quick with his hands and materials; right now he likes to work with toothpicks and bottle caps and glue — putting together cartoon collages out of them. I'm sure my own memories influence the ways I encourage the boys now. I've brought lots of these materials to the twins' Scout troop which I've been leading, and to my middle son's 4-H group.

Sometimes what parents remember and want to replicate for their children is a feeling or tone that pervaded their own childhood, as with Ralph's memories of freedom and responsibility. For other parents, it may be specific activities or a particular present that helped an interest to develop. As children go through

new stages of middle childhood, parents remember different aspects of their own past.



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE Lynn Johnston
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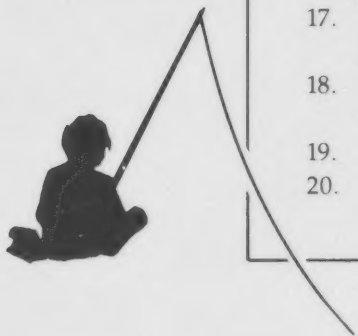
Conversations — Listening to Your Child

As a parent, you are always hearing your child. By focusing specifically on your child's conversations and listening to what he or she has to say, you can sometimes discover clues about your child's interests. You can often follow the leads that are buried in these conversations. Out of a child's random conversations, you

may begin to recognize patterns. You can ponder what these conversations reveal, and then concretely use these revelations in making a plan of action. A parent's job is to see that a child's interests are translated into experiences, and given an appropriate outlet or home. As a child talks, a parent can try to answer some of the following questions: What is my child telling me? What is my child curious about? What might my child want to know more about? Why is my child asking these questions? What does my child's conversation suggest about the directions of his or her interests?

You can also purposefully direct conversations by asking your child questions about his or her interests. Again, the answers may suggest directions for out-of-school life. For focused discussions between parents and children, the following two charts offer lots of suggestions. They will produce new ideas for parents to mull over, new leads into understanding a child's thinking and desires. Some experienced parents have found that it helps to take notes about these conversations; no one can rely completely on memory. It also makes sense to find a handy way to keep these notes. Perhaps the simplest is to write the gist of the child's conversation on a convenient piece of paper and to file the papers in a folder of big envelopes. The folder might be called "Allison's Interests" or "Adam's Current Gems."

The chart, *What's Fun? What's Fabulous?* offers questions to find out what activities children really love. Select those questions that seem appropriate for your child. The conversation may lead surprisingly into new and unfamiliar terrain, and give you the chance to listen with intuitive sensitivity. A parent can tune into the child's statements, go with the flow of the conversation and begin to get new insight into the child's thoughts. After asking some of these questions and listening patiently to the child's answers, parents may have to resist feeling overwhelmed, depressed, or discouraged by the child's candor. They must also resist the temptation to interrupt and expound on what *should* be the child's interest. Remember children vary in their ability to communicate, and age makes a difference, of course.



What's Fun? What's Fabulous?

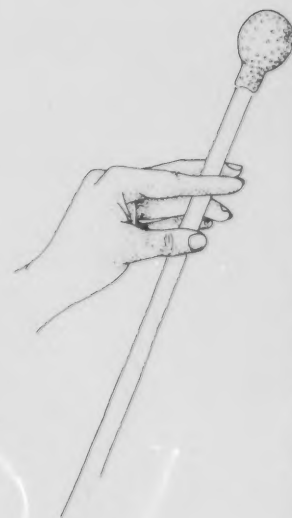
1. If you could do anything you want out of school, what would you do? Describe it.
2. What activity in the whole world would you most like to do?
3. What is your favorite thing to do out of school?
4. What is your least favorite thing to do out of school?
5. When you are not in school, what are the things that your friends do that you wish you could do?
6. What are you good at?
7. What do you think you are horrible at?
8. What do you wish you were better at?
9. What do you wish you could do that you don't know how to do?
10. What do you love to do at school?
11. What do you hate to do at school?
12. What do you do in school that you would like to do out of school?
13. What do you like to do around the house?
14. What do you hate to do around the house?
15. What do you like to do with your family?
16. What would you like to change that you now do out of school?
17. What do you do each season? How would you change these things if you could?
18. What places around where you live would you like to go to more often?
19. What is your best time of day and why?
20. What is your worst time of day and why?

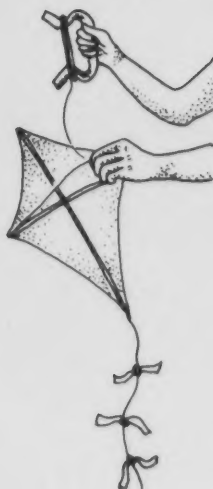
The following chart, *Yes, No, and Maybe*, includes a wide range of activities that many children this age actually do. Filling out this chart gives children new ideas and may show parents where a child has an inclination that is not fulfilled in his or her present out-of-school life. Nonreaders will need a little help. Some children put "XX" beside the activities they are especially eager to try. Watch for the smiles and listen for the groans as your child works at the chart. Activities are listed under the following major categories: Athletic Activities, Cultural Activities, Civic and Community Activities, Outdoor and Nature Activities, Developing Special Interests, Religious Studies, and Places to Visit. In a few instances, the activities in one category are also relevant to another category.

Yes, No, and Maybe

1.
● Athletic Activities

	Yes I'd Like To Do This	I Don't Want To Do This	Maybe I'd Like To Do This
Aerobics			
Archery			
Badminton			
Baseball			
Basketball			
Baton twirling			
Bicycling			
Boating			
Bowling			
Canoeing			





Cross-country skiing

Darts

Downhill skiing

Fencing

Field hockey

Fishing

Football

Golf

Gymnastics

Hiking

Horseback-riding

Horseshoes

Ice hockey

Ice-skating

Jogging

Judo

Juggling

Jumping rope

Karate

Kayaking

Kite flying

Paddle tennis

Paddle-boating

Raquetball

Rodeo

Roller skating

Sailing

Self-defense

Skate boarding

Soccer

Softball

Street hockey

Swimming

Surfing

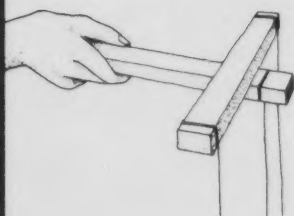
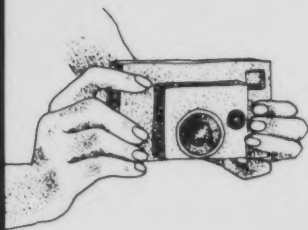
Yes I'd
Like To
Do This

I Don't
Want To
Do This

Maybe
I'd Like To
Do This

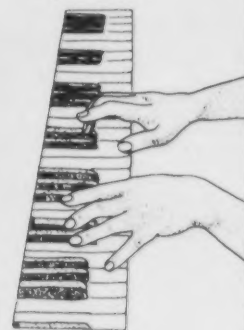
	Yes I'd Like To Do This	I Don't Want To Do This	Maybe I'd Like To Do This
Tai Chi			
Tennis			
Track and field			
Volleyball			
Water skiing			
Wrestling			
Yoga			
2.			
• Cultural Activities			
ARTS AND CRAFTS			
Architectural design			
Batik			
Cake decorating			
Calligraphy			
Candle making			
Carpentry			
Cartoon drawing			
Ceramics			
Crochet			
Decoupage			
Designing and making posters			
Doll making and doll house making			
Doodle art			
Dough art			
Embroidery			
Fabric painting			
Free-hand drawing			
Kite making			
Knitting			
Macrame			
Mathematical art			
Model building			
Mural painting			





	Yes I'd Like To Do This	I Don't Want To Do This	Maybe I'd Like To Do This
Needlepoint			
Oil painting			
Origami			
Photography			
Pottery			
Print making			
Puppet making			
Quilting			
Rug making			
Sand sculpting			
Sculpting			
Sewing			
Tie-dyeing			
Watercolor			
Weaving			
Woodcraft			
DANCE			
African dance			
Ballet			
Ballroom dance			
Belly dance			
Breakdance			
Creative movement			
Folk dance			
Irish dance			
Jazz dance			
Modern dance			
Square dance			
Swing dance			
Tap dance			

	Yes I'd Like To Do This	I Don't Want To Do This	Maybe I'd Like To Do This
MUSIC			
Band			
Chamber music			
Choir			
Chorus			
Making instruments			
Music appreciation			
Musical instrument lessons			
accordion			
autoharp			
cello			
clarinet			
cornet			
cymbals			
drums			
flute			
gong			
guitar			
harmonica			
maracas			
oboe			
organ			
piano			
piccolo			
recorder			
saxophone			
tambourine			
triangle			
trombone			
trumpet			
viola			
violin			
xylophone			
Opera			
Song writing			
Voice lessons			



	Yes I'd Like To Do This	I Don't Want To Do This	Maybe I'd Like To Do This
DRAMA			
Choral reading			
Clown lessons			
Community theatre			
Costuming			
Dramatization			
Face painting			
Improvisation			
Magic tricks and card tricks			
Make-up workshop			
Mask making			
Mime			
Play production			
Play writing			
Prop making			
Puppetry			
Role playing			
Set construction			
Theatre games			
Ventriloquism			
3.			
• <u>Civic and Community Activities</u>			
Art programs			
American National Red Cross Programs			
Big Brother/Big Sister Association			
Boys' Clubs of America			
Boy Scouts of America			
Camp Fire, Inc.			
Collectors' clubs			
Community newspaper			
Computer clubs			
Educational groups (study of mammals, study of rocks)			
Ethnic activities			

	Yes I'd Like To Do This	I Don't Want To Do This	Maybe I'd Like To Do This
Extended day and after-school programs			
4-H programs			
Friendship clubs			
Garden and horticultural groups			
Get a job (clean, care for another person, care for a pet, get a paper route, sell baked goods and candy)			
Girl Scouts of America			
Girls' Clubs of America			
Historical societies			
Hobby clubs			
Humane Society (taking care of animals)			
Language clubs (French, Spanish, Italian)			
Library and reading clubs			
Nature clubs			
Pupil-to-pupil programs (send a notebook or other school supplies to a student in a developing country)			
Special needs organizations (gifted, handicapped, etc.)			
Sports/fitness programs			
Student letter exchange (pen pals in another country)			
Town, recreation, community, and special programs			
Volunteer programs			
Writing clubs			
YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) and YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association)			
4.			
• <u>Outdoor and Nature Activities</u>			
Animal farm or shelter — study the animals			
Archeological program — attend and participate in a dig			

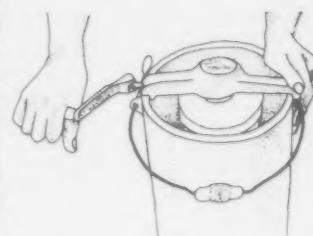
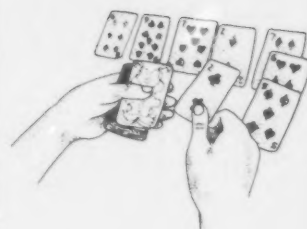


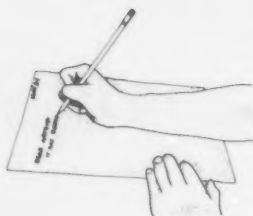
	Yes I'd Like To Do This	I Don't Want To Do This	Maybe I'd Like To Do This
Astronomy — view the constellations through a telescope			
Audubon sanctuary — take a guided walk or tour			
Audubon societies — join a youth program			
Backpacking — go on an extended adventure			
Bird watching			
Botanical gardens — explore and study			
Build a birdfeeder — record the birds			
Butterflies — catch and classify			
Cranberry bog or blueberry farm — visit and study the process			
Forests — explore			
Geology — collect and polish rocks			
Historical sights and neighborhoods — take a walking tour			
Islands — visit one and study life on it			
Life on a river — study it			
Mountain climbing			
Natural history — join a club			
Nature centers — attend a local program			
Nature craft activities — use all natural materials			
Plant a garden — flower or vegetable			
Pond life — explore it			
Science classes and workshops — attend at museums and planetaria			
Shell collecting			
Trees, shrubs, and flowers — study and classify			
Whale watching — go on an expedition and learn about whales			
Wild edible plants — study and classify			
Winter environment — explore			
Zoo — visit and study the animals			



5.
 ● Developing Special Interests

	Yes I'd Like To Do This	I Don't Want To Do This	Maybe I'd Like To Do This
Animals — adopt and care for one			
Archeology — go on a dig			
Astrology — study the stars, moon, and sun and their influences on our lives			
Aviation — learn about planes			
Cars — learn about old and new models			
C.B. radio			
Chemistry — begin to experiment			
Collecting — baseball cards; coins; dolls (and doll clothes and houses); miniature cars, railroad cars, and trains; stamps, etc.			
Computers — learn LOGO or BASIC			
Culinary arts and cooking			
Experimenting with electricity			
Film — make home movies			
Finance — set up your own bank account, keep track of your spending			
Game playing — backgammon, billiards, card games, checkers, chess, Clue, computer games, cribbage, designing code games, Dungeons and Dragons, Master- piece, Monopoly, pool, simulation games, etc.			
Genealogy — study your family history, make a tree, write stories of your grand- parents' childhoods			
Geography — buy a map of your state, buy a globe			
History — study a period you're interested in			
Languages — learn Spanish, French, Greek, German, etc.			
Learn about different ethnic groups			
Make a terrarium			
Make candy with molds			
Make ice cream			





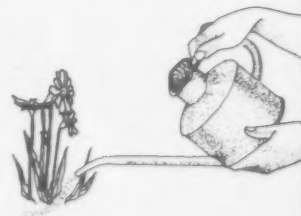
	Yes I'd Like To Do This	I Don't Want To Do This	Maybe I'd Like To Do This
Meditation			
Mind-stretchers			
Model car racing			
Navigation — map out your next trip			
Puzzles — complete 500 or 1000 pieces and frame			
Read books about famous people			
Read books of your choice and keep a record of them			
Research your town's activities			
Sign language			
Take a "transportation" ride just for fun — train, boat, plane			
Write a pen pal			
Write (books, newspapers, poems, plays, commercials)			
6.			
• <u>Religious Studies</u>			
Children's worship service			
Choir			
Hebrew school			
Religious education			
Special church and synagogue sponsored activities — movies, recreational or cultural			
Sunday school			
Youth program or club			
7.			
• <u>Places to Visit</u>			
Airport			
Aquarium			
Bakery			
Ballet recital			
Book publisher			
Brewery or bottling company			
Candle factory			
Car manufacturing plant			

	Yes I'd Like To Do This	I Don't Want To Do This	Maybe I'd Like To Do This
Cereal factory			
Circus			
Clothing manufacturer			
Computer company or store			
Courthouse or the State Capitol			
Farmers' market			
Greenhouse			
Historical site			
Hotel			
Library			
Modeling school			
Movies			
Museum (art, science, children's, transportation)			
Music concert			
Newspaper publisher			
Parents' place of work			
Picnic in the park			
Planetarium			
Printing company			
Puppet show			
Radio or TV station			
Sports event			
Sugar factory			
Telephone company			
Theatre			
Top of the highest building			
Toy manufacturer			



This List Goes On . . .

For lists of other ideas, see Appendix D, page 271, and select the appropriate books for you and your child. The category Activities for Children and Parents may be of special use. Also, chapter 3, "Resources — What Are the Options?" will help you



identify potential resources in your community. Most communities have a list of resources or publish pamphlets: check with your local Chamber of Commerce and the local bookstores.

Observations

A parent can develop an understanding of a child's perceptions of the world by watching the child use materials of all kinds. As children use paints, Legos, or clay, they provide a thoughtful observer with numerous clues about what they are thinking. Children's interactions with materials often provide a more neutral picture of how they think than does the rich, emotionally charged climate of conversation.

Some theorists have described children's play with open-ended materials as the "child-material dialogue," an interesting term which applies the principles of conversation to the child's experience of handling and organizing various materials. There are some materials which seem particularly rich in their ability to "speak" to children and suggest an enormous variety of possible uses and responses. Balls, dolls, blocks, water toys, paint and paper, and puppets are examples of items which are especially varied in the ways they suggest action to children, and in their capacity to initiate and sustain dialogue with children.

One way a parent might try to discover which materials really seem to speak to their own children is by taking them to an art supply store, stationery store, or hardware store and allowing them to browse. These stores offer more "grown-up" materials that may suggest activities to children which are less stereotyped than the responses elicited by some commercial games and toys. Of course, a large and well-stocked toy store can also be a place for children to browse and indicate their preferences, but such excursions also have their pitfalls, when children become overwhelmed, waylaid by TV advertising campaigns, or simply frantic.

Parents can watch their children engage in "dialogue" with a vast variety of materials, and in watching can surmise what meanings those materials have for them. Children need to be

provided with an environment rich in materials that they can use freely and that allow them to create problems they can solve. When parents watch their children become involved with new materials and see how these experiences nourish the child's thinking, they can begin to communicate with the child on a new level and with dignity.

Taking the Lead

Out of the insights gained from your intuitions and recollections, conversations with your children, and observations of them using various materials, directions should emerge that will help you make decisions on the best ways to use their out-of-school time. As important as these factors are, though, your decisions should also reflect your values and your own style of child rearing. Parents' convictions help shape the child's life.

Most parents naturally encourage pursuits that demonstrate what they hold important, whether it be sports, dance, or music, even though they may not be aware of it. You may find it useful to think about your own values and convictions regarding raising children as you and your child address out-of-school time. This time is the perfect arena in which to provide experiences that reflect those beliefs.

Values — How Parents Express Convictions

One of the most important tasks for parents during the years of middle childhood is teaching children values and interpreting the world to them. Ellen Galinsky, in *Between Generations: The Six Stages of Parenthood*, argues that the developing child affects and influences the adult's own growth process. A parent who has a child in middle childhood is in the *Interpretive Stage*, the fourth stage of parenthood. Middle childhood, she suggests, is the stage when children require interpretation of the world from their parents.¹ As a result, a major task for parents of children between six and twelve is to articulate their interpretations of the world. When

parents explain what is happening in various human situations and describe human events in moral terms, they are giving coherence to behavior so that children can better understand it.

Parents communicate values in a variety of ways. Perhaps the most pervasive way is by modeling. Parents often have little awareness of how much their children are absorbing just observing their manner in evening traffic, at the supermarket, talking to a friend on the phone, or giving a party. Even in the most routine situations, children are assimilating their parents' values. Parents also communicate their values to children by consciously including children in certain kinds of experiences — as they read aloud to children from a book that has special meaning, or complete an extended hike with their children, where finishing is a big accomplishment.

A mother who grew up speaking Arabic at home and English in school deliberately decided to give her child a similar experience of growing up bilingual. At considerable effort, she kept alive her own fluency in Arabic and her husband's, took her daughter to visit grandparents and their friends, and attended special occasions which helped her child know about and respect the family's culture. This mother said, "I really appreciate the way my parents taught me to value our culture. I want to give the same advantage to my child."

Parents also teach values explicitly. Occasions arise daily which prompt parents to put their values into words, and explain their principles and convictions to their children. Parents may discuss other children, or themselves as grown-ups or as children, to illustrate points. If a child's teammate has cheated, for example, it is an opportunity for parents to express feelings about honesty and fair play. The topic of "being fair" naturally becomes part of a family's conversation, and over time, children develop a keen understanding of what their parents think is fair. Teaching values involves a tremendous amount of conversation and work. To make clear the family's standards about failure to complete homework, or cheating in homework or team sports, these standards must be

repeatedly discussed. The consequences of unsatisfactory behavior have to be made explicit.

Specific events offer chances to talk about values, too. When a child has given his all in a game and still loses, parents have to make clear that this "failure" does not have further consequences. If the game was an important one, the players may go on feeling terrible about it for several days. This is the time for parents to make clear another value: that losing is part of playing team sports, that they still think it is worthwhile to play on a team, and that disappointments come to everyone. Children may need to be encouraged to stay with the sport or to think about the next game or the next year.

Taking care of a younger child teaches many values to a twelve-year-old. For example, when Zander was offered the opportunity of babysitting for five-year-old Craig, who lived on the second floor of his apartment building, his parents became very involved in helping him carry out his new responsibilities. Their attention to Zander's babysitting demonstrated the importance they placed on caring for children, and their confidence that he could do it.

Zander's mother is very much in favor of his job, even though it means she must be on call. She and Zander go shopping for snack ingredients when they know Craig is coming. She offers suggestions for activities and they purchase a few activity books with ideas for things to do with children. Zander's parents have explained what it means to "establish priorities" concerning his homework, babysitting, and other activities, since they believe it is important for him to start thinking about planning his time.

Babysitting is teaching Zander many values. Besides learning to organize a schedule and set priorities, Zander is becoming aware of the needs and interests of younger children. He recognizes the value of planning so neither he nor Craig will be bored. It is Zander's parents who make it possible for him to develop these insights through his own concrete experience.

A Note about Human Nature

It is not uncommon for parents to have some values which either they or their children do not fully acknowledge or comprehend. These hidden values may be implicit in adult actions. At times, parents' hidden values may actually be contradictory, which makes children angry, confused, or lethargic. For example, a father may value creative play (like having children make papier-mache masks) and still want to maintain perfect order in the workshop where mask making must take place.

A trusted observer may be able to help a parent see where contradictory or inappropriate expectations are placed on children. For example, parents may expect children to work cooperatively with each other and still to excel in competitive situations where their performances are compared. Or a parent may claim to value human diversity and yet restrict children's friendships with their peers of different races or social classes. Another parent may insist that a child participate in a hated activity (like taking sailing lessons) saying it is for the child's own good. Another person may be able to point out that it really serves the parent's own purposes. These less visible values that parents have become clearer in conversations with the trusted friend.

3

One family made a decision to involve their child in the life of her grandfather, which gave her insights into the value of close family ties, a sense of humor, and appreciation of human dignity.

Ashley's grandfather had been seriously ill for a long time and lived in a nursing home. Ashley frequently accompanied her parents in visiting him. Some residents of the home were in wheelchairs, others were lying in bed, and others appeared to be walking about aimlessly. Ashley's mother explained to her that some elderly people behave differently than you might expect. But she told her, "Be polite and talk to each person when they talk to you. Some (like grandfather) are very ill and need constant care."

One of the people who assisted Ashley's grandfather was a physical therapist. Occasionally, when Ashley visited, she saw "Amy PT" helping her grandfather with his walker. While Ashley had been somewhat shy and scared with her grandfather, "Amy PT" was always joking and bantering with him, calling him the "General," encouraging him to push himself a little harder each session. Ashley was amazed at the way the physical therapist told her grandfather, "You're doing a good job today, and soon you'll be chasing all of us." On several occasions Ashley saw her mother cry when they arrived home after a visit. Her father told her that it was hard for her mother to see her grandfather so ill, since she remembered him as an active man, taking care of a store, his apartment houses, and his beautiful garden full of vegetables and flowers.

Ashley's parents took the time to respond to her questions and concerns. As a result they helped her appreciate and respect older people. Listening to her grandfather's stories, she sensed another time and gained a historical perspective on her family. Ashley accepts old age as a part of life while appreciating how difficult moments can be handled with a light, humorous touch. Teaching compassion probably wasn't the explicit reason that Ashley's parents took her to the nursing home, but Ashley will probably never forget what the experience taught her.

Decisions

It is tempting to think that plans will just evolve. But parents and children do need to make decisions so that time is productive and is used in the ways that families really desire and for things they really value. A single mother of two children described the moment something clicked with her and she realized that she had to make some clearer decisions.

It was the fourth Saturday morning of the late fall when both children had sat all morning in front of the TV watching cartoons and quarreling. I suddenly realized that we had fifteen more Saturdays (and Sundays) to go before they could play outside on weekends, and I knew the whole winter would be wasted. I thought, "Something has just got to happen for them for part of each weekend." And I knew I couldn't do it all myself. I also knew that if I arranged lessons for them on Saturdays, the effect would carry over into the week. Each one could then work on the activity after school.

This parent correctly perceived that her children needed more interesting things to do. Most parents realize sooner or later that having children just hang around, bored and aimless, poisons the atmosphere all day for the whole family. Parents intuitively know that they have to make some decisions.

The chapters that follow will offer many concrete suggestions for locating or creating activities, managing time, and encouraging the growth of independence in your child — but it will still be up to you to make the decisions. Before going further, consider the following two points. They are intended to empower you as decision-maker.

Recognize your limits. Most parents are extremely busy; it is not easy to manage the multiple roles of working inside and outside the home as well as organizing children's out-of-school time. One mother, who was willing to take her sons to basketball practice three late afternoons a week pointed out that she could not

also be the one to fix dinner for the whole family. Someone — the father or older sister — would have to cook supper, or else they would sometimes have a take-out pizza, both acceptable alternatives. A father who was willing to take a child and a friend to practice at 7:00 A.M. four days a week realized that he absolutely had to have half an hour alone, without children's interruptions and questions, when he got home from work in the late afternoon.

One young woman reminisced about her mother's behavior when she was growing up with four younger brothers and sisters.

Every afternoon, my mother would go down to the den, turn all the lights off but one, and sit in the lounge chair reading a book. I remember so clearly feeling that she didn't want to talk to me, and that I was supposed to leave her alone. Then after half an hour, she would sit up, go into the kitchen, turn on the lights, feed the dog, and put on an apron. I knew that she was ready to have me around again. And now, as I look back on her behavior, I realize her time alone in the den was a necessary survival tactic for a mother of five children. Now I respect her for taking the time, even though it made me mad then.

Most parents soon realize when they are approaching the impossible. Maybe it is taking children to evening rehearsals or driving a late afternoon car pool when both parents work until 6:00 P.M., or scheduling so many activities that the whole family can never have dinner together. Maybe the last straw is not having a Saturday or Sunday afternoon to catch up on personal work, or having numerous children visiting at one time. Parents have their limits — and they should respect them.



Be authoritative. Parents who are not afraid to make decisions or to stick to some clear plans are most likely to create a rich and meaningful out-of-school life for their children. Psychologist Diane Baumrind of the University of California describes successful parents as "authoritative" ones who steer a course between laissez-faire permissiveness and rigid authoritarian behavior. "Authoritative" parents, she explains, establish clear limits, articulate their wishes to their children, firmly direct children without giving in to unreasonable demands, set high expectations for orderly behavior and contribution to the household, and allow a negotiation process with children in which there is an exchange of ideas leading to mutually agreeable solutions. If the child refuses to obey certain directions, the authoritative parent solicits the child's objections and shares the reasoning behind the policy. The authoritative parent affirms the child's present qualities, but also sets standards for future conduct.²

In a household where parents assume an authoritative role, children are given freedom within limits which are understood by all. Parents' control is not rigid, intrusive, or unnecessarily restrictive, and there is often a great deal of verbal give and take. Children who grow up in households with authoritative parents tend to be self-reliant, self-controlled, explorative, content, and have strong social skills.

Obviously, there are few parents whose child rearing styles are completely consistent at all times. Children's temperaments influence parents' behavior, and after all, all human beings are riddled with inconsistencies. However, one style of interaction probably predominates, and an authoritative style is most desirable for most children.

Amanda, who grew up in a small town in the west and is raising her own family in a rural community, is the mother of two children who are now thirteen and fourteen. She describes her decisions about child rearing in an unusually thoughtful way.

When my children were in first and second grades, I realized

that those first years, difficult as they had been, had gone by incredibly fast. I realized that we only had five years left before our oldest entered his teens. I was just determined that I never wanted to look back on these years and think, "I wish I had done better." I always wanted to be able to say, "We did it!" I know that for some people in our community, all the extra stuff I did was just fluff, but to me it was all as important as school.

I believed in making the absolute best out of whatever I could find. I thought, if you live in the middle of Vermont, it is a sin not to make use of winter — of snow and ice. If you live in the country, the whole family should create a garden, build a tree house, make dams in the stream, and learn to bike on the road. In all of this, I knew children and parents would not be equal. As a parent, I had to be the grown-up and provide the direction. The children might get whiny and other parents might be skeptical, but I tried to make decisions for the good of my kids.

You have to work hard during these years if you want to give children a glimpse of another life. So I talked to the recreation department about inexpensive skiing lessons for local children, and I helped the priest organize teachers for religious education at the church, and I talked to other mothers about bringing a ballet teacher to the school. You can't just call the ballet teacher and then bow out. And now, I look back and I see, it really paid off. You have to make decisions, and you have to be committed.

Decisions made for children in this age group do need frequent review, however, because interests and skill levels change. On the other hand, sometimes decisions need review because children persist in an interest which at first seemed to be only a phase or a passing fancy.

The divorced parents of two daughters decided that they could not afford to respond to the girls' interest in horses. But they discovered that the decision had to be reversed. They saw that their daughters spent hours reading about horses, drawing pictures of horses, and working in a riding stable where two of their



friends had a horse. The parents, who met once a month to discuss their daughters' needs, finally decided when Tanya was eleven and Joanne was nine that they could no longer ignore such a fervent interest. They agreed to take turns driving the girls to a riding school, which was an hour's drive away. Their daughters would have a morning of riding lessons and an afternoon of participating in a drill team.

But the parents made clear to the girls that one decision *could not* change; neither daughter could have a horse of her own, for the family could not afford it. The girls agreed not to ask for one. The girls were overjoyed to take lessons and became accomplished riders. They made many friends around the riding academy and continued lessons for three years, summers and winters. Their happiness in this activity had an influence on their lives in general — they both seemed excited, enthusiastic, talkative, and deeply involved.

Striking the Delicate Balance

As parents begin planning their children's out-of-school time, the dread specter of the "pushy parent" arises. Parents walk a fine line; they sometimes wonder if they are pushing children enough and at other times if they are expecting too much. Because out-of-school activities are optional and the choices are unlimited, parents may feel that enforcing attendance and following through with juggling lessons or tap dance classes makes them "pushy," and that being "pushy" is deplorable. On the other hand, they sense that in order to help children realize their potential, encouragement and support are necessary, and so planning and some degree of "pushiness" become necessary.

Everyone has an image of a "pushy parent," and can describe one vividly. It is the parent who either seems to be living vicariously through children's achievements, or the one who insists that children perform at a level which constantly creates anxiety and stress, or both. The "pushy mother" is the one who calls to demand that her child be given the lead in the school play

because the child attends after-school drama classes. The "pushy father" is the one who insists that his reluctant son go to judo practice three mornings a week, despite the fact that his son throws up often in the morning and begs not to go. It seems "pushy" to force a child to practice the oboe for a full hour every day even though the child repeatedly protests that he hates the instrument. Likewise, launching a child on a modeling career when she is nine, talking constantly about her portfolio, and ignoring her pleas to visit her friends would strike almost anyone as "pushy." Putting pressure on a child to make a hit when she is at bat, yelling at her that she is stupid and not paying attention, berating her if she strikes out, all epitomize the behavior of a parent most people would call "pushy."

In the book, *The Hurried Child*, psychologist David Elkind writes that:

... particularly in middle-class families, young people often become enmeshed in "achievement overload." So much emphasis has been placed on achievement that young people overload their schedules: a child may be taking ballet and piano lessons, playing in the softball league, doing volunteer work in the hospital, and still may be carrying a full course load in school. Many of these young people have to keep date books because their time is so tightly scheduled.³

Elkind goes on to explain why he thinks children slip into this condition.

Achievement overload often occurs because the child has misread the parent's support of achievement. When young people assume that parents are concerned only with how well they do, rather than with who they are, the need to achieve becomes addictive. True meaningful support should communicate to children that achievements are supported because they are good for the children. Then the children recognize that what they are doing is for their own good and not just for the parents. When children feel that achievement is for the parent, not for the self, they either

eventually give up or go into achievement overload to assure continuation of parental support.⁴

Striking a balance between too much emphasis on achievement and too little is a dilemma for parents. They have to beware of becoming too wrapped up in a child's accomplishments, misreading the child's disposition, or encouraging accomplishments which are detrimental to the child. There is no easy way to find the right balance, but conversations and observations can help. Sometimes, parents just have an intuitive sense that "enough is enough," or "this is really too much." Sometimes simply canceling one activity, relaxing the pressure in one part of the calendar, letting one lesson be missed, can right the balance, and the child is on an even keel again. Parents can also find ways to make clear that they value each child and not just the child's accomplishments.

But all parents who care for their children "push" their children and push *for* their children at times. The push is particularly visible in out-of-school time, because few children can organize that time without help. Most parents find that they have to overcome the fear of being too pushy in order to provide their children with the direction they need. In fact, parents *have* to be a little "pushy." For example, giving up on projects is a common phenomenon among children, because frustration sets in when



they get to a certain level of difficulty and they feel defeated. A parent has a crucial influence on whether a child makes it through this frustration, or gives up. Parents and children together can establish a pattern of throwing in the towel whenever an endeavor seems too tough. This pattern damages a child's self-esteem, because it suggests that the parents are swamped by the child's frustration and accept it totally. A parent's combination of humor and firmness enables the family to weather a trying stage and allows the child to reach the next level.

A child can have as many as seven hours a week in planned out-of-school activities, and have a very involved parent, and still not be overextended or overly pushed. In fact, this amount of time in scheduled activities during the school year is appropriate for certain children.

Some parents are accused of being "pushy," when in fact they are responding sensitively and appropriately to the temperament of a particular child. Some children may be slow to warm up and timid about experimentation. Parents of such children, knowing this, realize that they must cajole, encourage, and even push in order to get them to try new activities and to follow through with them. Other children have such powerful inner drives to achieve that it would be unnecessary for parents to add any fuel to their desires and drives. Instead, the parent's role is one of introducing activities, assisting in making them possible, and offering praise. "Pushing" children or encouraging children to undertake and persevere in challenging endeavors is a way parents show love for their children and demonstrate confidence in them.

When Priscilla, mother of five children, each of whom has found a separate niche in the world, was asked how she fostered their abilities, she said, "I waited until an interest bubbled up; then I pounced on it." Her sensitivity to her children was demonstrated by her waiting for each child to give a lead, but her love for them was demonstrated by her following through on those interests.

Sometimes parents are tempted by their own feeling not to push children who are very ready to try something new. Dis-

couraged by the cold, the expense, the early practices, and the unfamiliar atmosphere, one couple almost missed the chance to support their seven-year-old's eagerness to try ice hockey. Three years later, they vividly recalled the first day they took Scott to the ice hockey rink. During preliminary skating drills, they looked at the seventy children on the ice and immediately realized that their child was the only one without proper hockey pads and gear. Then they noticed that in every skating exercise, Scott was the last one out of seventy to finish. As the father and mother stood on the sidelines and watched, the mother said, "Why are we making him do this, anyway?" The father sharply replied, "It was never my idea for him to do this macho thing." When Scott got off the ice, however, they refrained from making discouraging comments and merely asked, "How do you feel?" Scott said, "I did great! I didn't throw up and I didn't cry. I can't wait for the next practice." Today at ten, Scott loves to skate and is on a local hockey team. Parents are sometimes amazed at children's resilience and indifference to problems that might bother an adult; children have a different perspective on experiences which might daunt their parents.

Sometimes a parent feels lukewarm about a child's current interests, or even dismayed. A very literate father was appalled that his eleven-year-old daughter was chiefly interested in reading about movie stars and Princess Diana. He once said, "How could a child of mine be so interested in fluff?" But even though he isn't crazy about her choices, he does buy her books about her idols, and sometimes he gently attempts to broaden her interests. His way of "pushing" her is to avoid openly insulting her taste. Instead, he honors her interests and uses them as the wedge for helping her develop more mature tastes and knowledge. He recently gave her illustrated books about the coast of England and about precious gems.

Some parents think it is "pushy" to have children make and keep their commitments for a certain period of time. But many families believe it is appropriate to require a child to make a consistent effort for an agreed upon period. For example, some

parents expect that a child will continue in chosen lessons for at least a year; some expect a two-year commitment, particularly if costly equipment is required or the endeavor is especially demanding.

It is not uncommon for a perceptive parent to give pep talks occasionally:

I can see you're not crazy about these lessons. But I want you to keep working on them for one more year. Right now, you're at a hard point; I know it's hard for you. But in a year you may be so much better that you'll be glad you didn't quit.

A parent of a twelve-year-old may say:

I know you really don't like to put your face under water, and I really don't care whether or not you become a great form swimmer or racing swimmer. But I feel strongly that you need to learn to swim for your own safety if you want to begin sailing.

Sometimes parents are so fearful of making a mistake in encouraging a child to achieve a skill that they back off and do not even try. But there is a certain wisdom in one father's remark about his children's reluctance to attend a weekly religious education class: "They don't want to go. But they want to be *made* to go."

Two parents tell stories of how they pushed their children. Both were determined to see their children through difficulty, and in both cases, the children offered resistance. By fourteen, with their parents' strong encouragement and even pressure, each had acquired skills they enjoyed and felt good about.

When Paul was eight, his grandmother gave the family a piano, and his parents began looking for a piano teacher. Two teachers were tried, and then the family abandoned the effort for a while. Paul said, "Mom, piano is okay for you and for your mother, but boys don't play the piano."

The fall when Paul was going on nine, the mother found a man in his late twenties who gave piano lessons and was described by neighbors as "a genius with kids." She arranged for Paul to have

lessons. At first this worked, but within a few months Paul was balking at his lessons again. Sometimes he even shed tears as they got into the car and set out for the dreaded lessons, and a few times they even cancelled. But the mother kept saying, "This is something I feel strongly about. I won't force you to practice — that's between you and David [the teacher]. But I can insist that you have a lesson once a week, and I can try to give you lessons with the best possible teacher I can find." Paul didn't love it, but he liked David, and he went most times to his lesson.

The turning point came when David announced that he was moving to New York to become a professional musician, and that Paul would have to have a new teacher. All at once, Paul's tears were over his missed chance and the loss of a friendship. He made a resolution to try harder. The new teacher, Bruce, earned his living as a jazz musician and as a piano teacher. Suddenly, Paul's music became interesting to him. In the fall when he was twelve, Bruce invited Paul to join a jazz ensemble composed of three other children and three adults, and Paul was thrilled. Now Paul not only had an hour lesson a week, but also an hour-and-a-half group lesson with the ensemble. He began to practice in his free time, and he began to play in front of his school friends.

At fourteen he is perceived by his friends as a kid who knows how to do something interesting, and he now loves his music. He once even said, "When I think how close I came to quitting, I really get scared!" But his mother says, "I wasn't going to let you quit, so don't worry!"

Many parents might regard this mother as "pushy," and certainly Paul did. But now he says he is glad she kept him going. Throughout the trying times with Paul's piano lessons, this mother was clear that her commitment to the lessons was to give him a skill he would enjoy once he got past the discouraging stage. She also believed that his music would be "insurance for adolescence" — a skill that would help him weather the emotional storms of the middle teens and offer an outlet for expression.



Another child whose parents insisted that he stick with an activity was Barney, but in his case, he had requested lessons and his parents had responded to his initial interest.

When Barney was in third grade, he and two friends decided they wanted to take tennis lessons. His mother was delighted and located a tennis club near where they lived which offered tennis lessons for children. At first, it appeared that Barney was making good progress for a beginner who was so young. However, in the spring, a seasonal report came home from the teacher to the family, and it was clear that Barney was a child with lots of potential in tennis. Unfortunately, he was spending most of his lesson time fooling around, talking back to the teacher, and entertaining other kids with explanations about why he couldn't improve his serve.

Barney insists to this day that the coach who wrote that report was a "real stupe." However, when Barney's parents read this report, they were quite annoyed. They asked Barney why they were paying for these lessons if he was just going to waste his lesson time. Barney cried. He also blamed the coach, the other kids, and the club. His parents declared that if Barney wanted to continue these lessons, he would have to promise to make a solid effort. Barney said he would, and that he did not want to quit.

For the next four weeks, Barney's parents took turns going with him to his lessons, to assess the problem. The whole situation

began to sort itself out. Barney decided to make a go of it, and when he was assigned to a new coach, he began to make progress again.

Since that time, Barney has been to tennis camps, he plays in tournaments, he plays doubles with his father and others, and he often says, "I really love tennis. Tennis is the sport that I'm terrific at!" Six years after he began his lessons, he played with his cousin, a superior tennis player, and she said, "I can't believe how you've shaped up. Barney. You used to be pitiful at tennis."

Many people would regard Barney's mother and father as "pushy" — after all, they scolded Barney until he cried, they went to his lessons with him, and they insisted that he "shape up" if he was going to continue to have lessons. Although Barney still looks back on that incident as being entirely the coach's fault, and maybe it was, Barney now has a skill which he loves and enjoys.

These stories clearly illustrate just how powerful a parent can be. Recent educational research has begun to document the enormous importance of parents. Professor Benjamin Bloom, at the University of Chicago, has long been interested in the development of human potential and conducted the "Development of Talent Research Project" which reveals the critical role of parents. The hypothesis of the study is that a large pool of talent is available in each society, talent that will either be developed or wasted. Dr. Bloom's research was based on the study of the lives of 100 exceptionally successful men and women under the age of thirty-five (so chosen in order to obtain information from their still-living parents and teachers). In this study, Bloom identified world-famous people in six different fields: concert pianists, sculptors, research mathematicians, research neurologists, tennis players, and Olympic swimmers.

Bloom's findings repeatedly indicate the crucial importance of parents in fostering children's achievement. While many of the people in the study were more talented than average as children,

none was a child prodigy. None could have been picked out from a larger group of active children at the age of five or ten. What, then, were the elements in the exceptional adults' childhood environment that fostered their talent? The most common factor that Bloom isolated among his subjects was the extraordinary influence of parents. It was the parent who praised, encouraged, motivated, and was most keenly aware of the child's potential. The adults in Bloom's study had been talented children, but the energetic and thoughtful way their parents encouraged these talents was behind their success.⁵

Maya Pines summarized the results of Bloom's research in an article published in the *New York Times* called "What Produces Great Skills? Specific Pattern is Discerned." In this article, Bloom reports, "The old saw that 'genius will out' in spite of circumstances is not supported by our study."⁶ Pines reports that although "environmental conditions vary somewhat for different kinds of talent . . . in all cases they involve these factors:

- "Parents who greatly value and enjoy either music, sports, art, or intellectual activity and view it as a natural part of life, so that the child learns its 'language' as easily as he learns to speak.
- "Parents who believe in the work ethic.
- "A first teacher who is warm and loving, who makes the lessons seem like games and lavishes rewards. This teacher need not be highly skilled. For the pianists, it was a neighborhood teacher; for the mathematicians, it was usually their own father. But the instruction must be given on a one-to-one basis, and parents must take interest in it.
- "A second teacher who emphasizes skills and self-discipline. Again, instruction must be individualized . . .
- "A gradual change in the child and his family as both realize the progress the child has been making. They now begin to focus their resources on the developing talent.



JANE SCHER

• "Access to what Professor Bloom calls a 'master teacher' — one of the rare experts who know how to train top professionals and open the right doors for them. Some families traveled 2,000 or 3,000 miles to find such a teacher or coach. No sacrifice in time, money or effort seemed too great."

Bloom reports that in each of these families only one child was singled out to excel, even though all the other children in the family had been exposed to the same lessons or activity. The one chosen was not always the most talented but the one with the most profound desire to achieve. In these families, the attention to the "chosen child" was almost like a "vocation in the religious sense," according to Bloom. He feels that this kind of extreme dedication to a talent is beneficial to the child and to society.

A final note: these talented individuals, as children and adolescents, spent as much time each week on their talent as their peers spent watching television! Bloom has also begun to answer the question of why some individuals are so highly committed to learning while others are so easily distracted. Bloom's research clearly suggests that it is the parents who determine the direction and development of a child's talent, who teach the value of work, and who provide the emotional climate a child needs to achieve.

Parents who are anxious about making decisions for their children can take heart from the recollections of adults who look back on their decisive parents with gratitude. When Bill, a skilled carpenter, reminisced about becoming an Eagle Scout, he said, "I never could have gotten it without my mother. She helped me stick to it all those years." A mother responded to her friend's fear that their children's hockey camp was too strenuous for them. She said, "I'm glad they are being challenged. They can do so much more than they are asked to do. I remember when I finally had a dance teacher who said I wasn't trying hard enough. She said, 'You're doing the steps, but you're not dancing.' With that teacher, I finally started to dance. They may learn to play hockey with coaches like these."

When Sarah Vaughan appeared on national television in the spring of 1982, she said, "I thank my mother for making me take piano lessons."⁸ Vaughan's remark echoes a poem by Diane Wakoski, a contemporary American poet. The poem is entitled, "Thanking My Mother for Piano Lessons."

*I want to thank
my mother for working and always paying for
my piano lessons
before she paid the Bank of America loan
or bought the groceries
or had our old rattling Ford repaired.*

*I want to thank my mother
for letting me wake her up sometimes at 6 in the
morning when I practiced my lessons
and for making sure I had a piano
to lay my school books down on, every afternoon.*

*I want to thank my mother for giving me
piano lessons
all those years,
keeping the memory of Beethoven,
a deaf tortured man,
in mind;
 of the beauty that can come
from even an ugly
past.⁹*

Chapter 2 Footnotes

1. Ellen Galinsky, *Between Generations: The Six Stages of Parenthood*. New York: Times Books, 1981, p. 199.
2. Diana Baumrind, "Effects of Authoritative Parental Control on Child Behavior," *Child Development*, 37, No. 4 (1966), p. 890.
3. David Elkind, *The Hurried Child*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1981, p. 129. Reprinted by permission.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Benjamin S. Bloom, "The Role of Gifts and Markers in the Development of Talent," *Exceptional Children*, 48, No. 6 (April, 1962), pp. 510-520.
6. Maya Pines, "What Produces Great Skills? Specific Pattern is Discerned," *The New York Times Company*, March 30, 1982, p. C1. Reprinted by permission.
7. *Ibid.*, C1-C2.
8. Personal Correspondence, Sarah Vaughan. May, 1984.
9. Diane Wakoski, "Thanking My Mother for Piano Lessons," *Motorcycle Betrayal Poems*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1977, lines v.35-40, xi.108-112, and xii.138-146.



RICHARD HOWARD: Boston Children's Museum

Resources — What Are the Options?

Searching for Resources

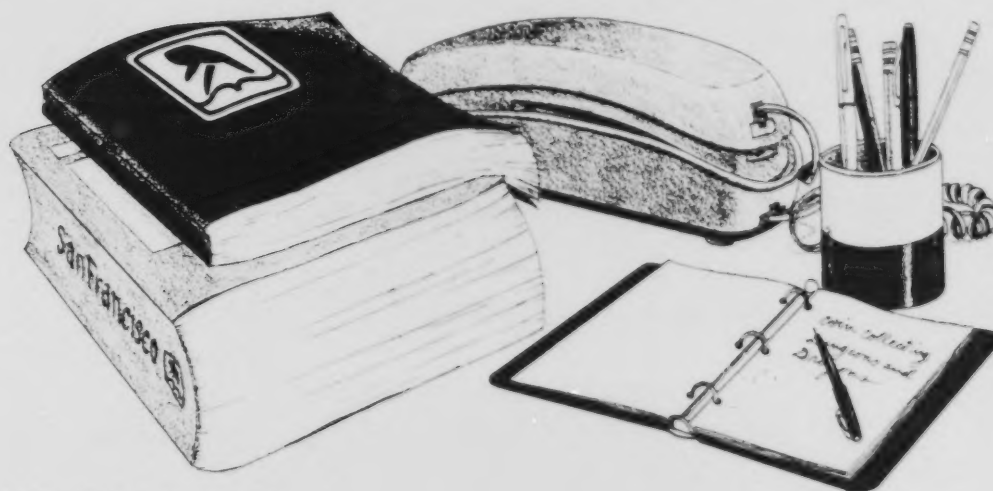
ALL ASPECTS of child rearing lead parents into new territory, but middle childhood is an especially exciting period. Because of their children's curiosity and new-found interests, parents find themselves experiencing their own communities as if for the first time — entering buildings they have walked by for years, making new friends and connections, reading parts of the newspaper they had always skipped. Such outings as a trip to a Greek grocery store, attending a children's jazz concert, eating a Chinese breakfast on a Sunday morning, or going to the small engine show in a rural community are important for children because experiences like these expand their knowledge and appreciation of others. Parents are also likely to find these new contacts stimulating and refreshing.

This chapter will help you locate resources in your community — not just already organized activities, but also people with special talents and places of unusual interest. It will be helpful whether your child is six or eight, and whether you have lived in your community six days, six months, or sixteen years. Before you begin, review your child's answers to the questions in the charts in chapter 2. This will be a good starting point.

Collecting Ideas

When you search for resources for children in your community, the first thing to do is collect as many leads as you can — names, addresses, and phone numbers of organizations, institutions, and individuals. As you begin to follow leads, you will find that quite often each one will direct you to one or two more. As you continue this process of networking, you may be amazed at the range of possibilities and the number of overlooked resources that can be found even in a small town.

As you gather information, it is helpful to file it away systematically. Keep a notebook in which you can record the data you gather by talking to people, surveying the neighborhood, and making phone calls. These notes, together with any notes you've kept on your child's interests, will be extremely valuable when it is time to make final decisions about what leads to pursue. Besides, some bits of information that are useless to you now may be



important to you in a year or so. Good notes will save you from having to begin from scratch.

The guidelines that follow were compiled from suggestions made by parents from many different communities.

Listen carefully to your child. Suppose he describes the great time he had examining his friend's foreign coin collection or hearing about a group that plays Dungeons and Dragons. If he brings the subject up several times and seems genuinely enthusiastic, you may want to follow through on these leads. Contact friends who travel and ask them to bring back foreign currency, or find out when a "D and D" group meets and see if your child can join it.

Listen to your child's friends. When a friend comes to play and surprises you by performing magic tricks she just learned from a magician, jot down the magician's name and phone number or call her mother for the information.

Question other children's parents. When you meet a father at a PTA meeting, and he extols the value of Cub Scouting in his son's life, ask for the name and number of the Scout leader.

Talk with the school staff. When attending parent conferences, ask for a list of school-sponsored activities. Think about which ones might be appropriate for your child.

Talk to the local librarian. Quite often libraries run programs such as reading groups, writing clubs, or film making workshops. Ask if your child could join.

Connect with your neighbors. A neighbor may tell you about how her daughter enjoyed the local environmental class. Find out where it is held.

Listen to the sitter. She apologizes for being ten minutes late; she was working overtime as a volunteer basketball coach for children at the community center. Inquire about what experience children must have before joining the program, or maybe she'd be willing to coach your child.

Listen
Question
Look
Talk

Think
Connect

Think about your own skills. Don't overlook your talents in responding to your child's interests. One child, intrigued with knitting, asked her mother to locate someone to teach the craft. The mother knew how herself. The child never knew her mother used to knit; they chuckled when they found the old needles, yarn, and unfinished mittens in the grandmother's closet. After buying new materials, both mother and daughter shared a hobby the mother had "stored away."

Be on the lookout for general notices. Community gathering places such as post offices, supermarkets, laundromats, public transit stations, ice cream parlors, and neighborhood libraries often provide boards where people post notices of activities. Places like banks where daily business is conducted may also have postings on bulletin boards. Make note of items of interest for your file.

Look for specific notices. Events, programs, seminars, and lessons sponsored by libraries, adult education centers, colleges, local schools, child care facilities, museums, community centers, local Ys, churches or synagogues, and police stations are usually advertised. When returning books to the library, visit the Children's Room to note upcoming events. You may find announcements about school vacation film programs or a Saturday afternoon science-fiction reading series. Pick up fliers or brochures. Put your child's name on the mailing list. Make note of cards people post to exchange services or to advertise their skills. Consider notices of people teaching specific skills, such as wreath making or rug hooking; inquire whether that craftsperson might instruct a child or group of children.

Check for booklets. Communities sometimes produce special publications of services, programs, and events for children and youth.

Read local newspapers. Most papers publish daily or weekly calendars of special events and beginning or continuing programs. Often they contain listings in such categories as "Activities for

Children," "Outdoor Events," and "Free or Cheap Activities." Check the classified advertisement section and cut out announcements that relate to your child's interests. Many papers also distribute seasonal or periodic supplements that list upcoming regional events. For example, a fall supplement may announce the dates of the agricultural fair and list farms that allow families to pick their own apples. File these supplements; you'll eventually have a reference collection on community activities for all seasons. Some older children will enjoy helping to set up this file.

Examine the mail. Occasionally "junk mail" contains useful information. Many organizations send brochures describing activities and programs, schedules, and fees.

Use telephone books. Many large cities have a special section at the back of the white pages listing government and public services. If this is not the case, look under the community's name within the body of the book to seek existing agencies. Some agencies have ambiguous names; "Youth Services," for example, may be an agency which addresses psychological issues, or it could offer recreational programs. The Yellow Pages are an invaluable resource to families. Peruse the Yellow Pages and possibly discover a musical instrument store that offers lessons, an art supply store whose owner gives watercolor instruction, or a fabric store that offers sewing courses.

Pay attention to local media. Television and radio stations frequently broadcast calendars of community events.

Making Initial Contacts and Gathering Information

Now you undoubtedly have a long list of people and places to contact, and can begin to pursue the most interesting ones by telephone. Although using the telephone is a nearly universal skill, it is still possible for most people to use it in a more effective and creative way. A *Telephone Exploration Sheet* is provided so that you

Telephone Exploration
Sheet

Activity / Organization _____

Telephone Number _____

Contact Person _____

Activity Offered _____

Ages _____

Cost _____

How Long _____

Starting Date _____

General Impressions _____

Activity / Organization _____

Telephone Number _____

Contact Person _____

Activity Offered _____

Ages _____

Cost _____

How Long _____

Starting Date _____

General Impressions _____

can jot down information on some things that could be of interest to your child.

Set aside adequate time. Most families have found that 1½ to 3 hours is required for concentrated telephone work in an initial attempt to locate resources for children. The initial attempt will be the most time-consuming, but thereafter the task becomes easier because of the accumulated information. Few parents will have three hours to devote to this during the day, so they must divide the project into blocks. Consider allocating parts of the task to an articulate sitter or sharing the responsibility with other parents.

Telephone work can be frustrating. The information required often cannot be obtained on the first call. Sometimes the person who answers the phone is too busy or overworked to give complete information, or the appropriate person is not available or works limited hours. It is often difficult to reach people between noon and 2:00 P.M. Seeking referrals may be difficult because many people you will reach don't know about the range of available programs. Sometimes an answering machine is all you get. Be sure to leave a message, and then follow up with another call; be persistent. Despite these frustrations, the telephone is still the most efficient means of gathering information, and most parents find that when they ask clear, specific questions, they generally receive cooperation.

Request literature. If the person you reach can't answer questions about schedules, cost, and financial aid, then ask if that information is included in the literature. Some organizations mail brochures; others require that a self-addressed stamped envelope be sent or that materials be picked up at their office.

Ask specifically about financial aid. Typically, it is limited and not well advertised. Even people working in the organization are often unaware of such funds. Therefore, if your family needs financial aid, be sure to inquire directly about such a policy with the program director. Criteria for aid and the form of aid itself varies. Full scholarships or reduced rates may be available. Some

programs use only financial need as a criterion; others consider merit. Yet many organizations do have some resources. Therefore, if financial aid is an issue — ask!

Look for inexpensive resources to support your children's interests. Check thrift shops or find out when various schools or organizations have their sports equipment exchanges, such as an annual "Boots for Boots." Locate music stores that rent musical instruments, and check the want ads for second-hand recreational equipment you need.

Note information about schedules and deadlines. Most organizations and private instructors start new terms every three to four months. If a call is made between terms, a child may have to wait for the next session. Remember, deadlines exist. Don't wait too long to make final decisions; there may not be an opening. Inquire if a waiting list is kept and what the chances are of getting into the desired program.

Be flexible. When exploring community resources, be aware of surprise possibilities. You may learn about something unexpectedly. For example, when inquiring about a computer programming course, you may also discover a special photography series, a Mexican art pottery class, a theater arts program, or a mini-course in cake decorating. Record intriguing unsolicited findings as well as requested information.

Look for bonuses. Some towns have developed collaborative arrangements whereby a child may swim at one facility and join a dance club at another, or take advantage of the library reading clubs in both towns. Ask to have your name put on mailing lists of groups which offer such opportunities.

Established Organizations with Programs for Children

For over a hundred years Americans have organized various kinds of structured activities for children outside school. For many

adults these experiences were a memorable part of childhood. For some people, organizations such as Scouting provided camaraderie, a sense of belonging, and intense team spirit. For other people, karate classes or being a member of the marching band allowed them the chance to learn and share a special talent with other children and adults.

There are an astounding number of organizations with activities for children. For example, did you know that there is an American Checker Federation and a national group called American Water Ski Association? There is an organization for just about every specialized interest or remote topic imaginable. A resource list identifying a variety of national organizations that serve children in a direct or indirect way is included in the appendices. This list represents only a fraction of the vast number of specialized interest groups. For example, we have not included the National Association of Fly-Tying, but if your child is interested in fishing, other organizations which support that interest may lead you to it. Also, a resource list of annotated reference books for locating other child-serving organizations is given.

There are some real advantages to children of participating in such organized activities. The most obvious advantage of organized programs is that they already exist. They usually have published offerings and a physical facility. Because these programs are ongoing, they are easy to locate. They are often led by a qualified adult. Furthermore, organized activities and programs tend to have clear expectations of the child and the family, such as rules about attendance, make-up sessions, and who is eligible to play in the game or perform in the show. Established organizations have reputations in the community so parents can make informed decisions about them. Often, too, their programs have a stated philosophy so parents can ascertain if it is in harmony with their own beliefs. Within the network of participating families, it may be possible to exchange equipment, form car pools, and trade services. Finally, children who participate in organized programs

that have a national affiliation can often establish connections with other regional groups while on vacation or if they move.

However, there may be drawbacks to organized programs. First, the program's schedule may not fit the family's needs. Perhaps the program meets only for an hour in the middle of the afternoon every other week, and the complex transportation arrangements required are simply not worth the effort. Alternatively, the program may require a three-hour commitment twice a week, and the child will feel he or she has no more free time. Such mismatches between family needs and program schedules are common. Also, the program's location may make the whole arrangement impossible. The program's philosophy regarding the socialization of children may be so rigid that certain children would be miserable in it. A highly competitive program may damage one child's self-esteem, or a program that emphasizes group cooperation may stifle another child's curiosity and creativity. Moreover, long-standing organizations may be very resistant to change. For example, current societal attitudes toward achievement for girls and women are often not reflected or modeled by coaches, leaders, teachers, and other adults in such programs. Finally, parents should scrutinize organized programs and activities carefully. For example, a community music center which never holds recitals should be asked why not. There can be unscrupulous people in such organizations who simply take parents' money, fill up children's time, and yet accept no accountability for actually achieving anything.

The chart *Considerations for Our Family* offers a quick check of questions you may want to ask people who sponsor organized activities for children. The chart will help you consider the pros and cons of any given program. Choose the questions that seem important to you. It could be helpful to record information on the chart *Community Resources Inventory* (page 96).

Athletic activities

Cultural activities

Civic & community activities

Outdoor & nature activities

Developing special interests

Religious studies

Places to visit

Considerations for Our Family

✓ WHEN?

How often does it meet?
What is the schedule?
Are missed classes a problem?
Are there make-up classes?
When am I required to be there?

✓ WHERE?

Where is it offered?
Can one get there by public transit or car pool?
How far is it from home?
How far is it from school?

✓ COST?

What is the fee?
Do we pay by month, by semester, by year?
Is there a scholarship program?
If we cancel do we get a refund?
When?
How many sessions must we pay for initially?
Must we buy or rent any equipment?
Any projections on program costs for the next 2 years?

✓ WHO INSTRUCTS?

Who is the instructor?
How much experience has the instructor had?
What do other people say about this person's skills?
How will progress be reported to parents?

✓ WHO ELSE DOES IT?

What are the ages, sexes and experience levels of the others signed up?
Who will my child know?
Is it possible to contact other families to work out car pools?

✓ WHAT ELSE?

How structured is this activity?
Is it part of a series?
Is there another level and what's involved in it?
Do you sponsor any free, special, or summer events?

**Community
Resources
Inventory**

Activity: _____
Organization _____
Address _____
Telephone Number _____
Contact Person _____
General Impressions _____
Specific Things to Remember _____

Issues important to our family: _____

Activity: _____
Organization _____
Address _____
Telephone Number _____
Contact Person _____
General Impressions _____
Specific Things to Remember _____

Issues important to our family: _____

Activity: _____
Organization _____
Address _____
Telephone Number _____
Contact Person _____
General Impressions _____
Specific Things to Remember _____

Issues important to our family: _____

The following vignettes highlight some families' experiences with organized activities — some were satisfactory, some were not.

Eileen, now a graduate student in sociology, has vivid memories of a free community tennis program in which she participated as a child. She says, "Every summer day when I was ten I would recite, 'Mom, I'm bored, what can I do today?' My mother's usual response was, 'You can help me clean the house.' One day she noticed an advertisement in the local newspaper announcing free tennis lessons at the playground. Tennis rackets and balls were included, so she enrolled me. I spent every day of that summer playing tennis. At the end of the first season, my team won a trip to Washington, D.C. to participate in a national tournament. This was the first of numerous trips for which I qualified. As I grew older and my skills improved, I was named Most Valuable Player on my high school team, became a tennis instructor for the playground program, and was awarded a college tennis scholarship. Without that scholarship I might not have been able to attend the University of Pennsylvania. Those free tennis lessons were the basis for developing concentration, discipline, good sportsmanship, physical endurance, and life-long friendships. Every time I walk into the house and see the piano covered with trophies, I'm reminded of how my mother, who has since died, did me a great favor by finding that ad in the newspaper."

•

At the age of eight, Elizabeth learned to skate at an ice rink near where her parents worked. Since she appeared to enjoy skating, her parents enrolled her in a figure skating class. Elizabeth's parents, teachers, and peers considered her a very good skater, but as an adult, she has ambivalent feelings about her group skating experience. "I used to enjoy skating alone, at my own pace. If I fell or wanted to rest, I didn't worry. But once I became part of a group, the fun stopped. I was trying too hard to be the best. I thought I was a failure if I fell down or didn't master an

intricate routine. I stayed with it for three years but quit just as I was asked to participate in a public performance. As I look back, I sometimes wish that I hadn't given up so easily when the competition got tough. I'd probably be a pretty good skater today; instead, I'm a jack-of-all-trades, master of none."

•

Renee is an eleven-year-old who has gotten involved in a Family Theater for the last two years. Renee has had parts in such plays as *Superman* and *The Wiz*. She attends the theater's drama workshops every week, where she works on improvisation, mime, and body movement. Through working on the crew, she has learned about designing props, making costumes, and building sets. Renee often spends four hours a week at the theater, and during productions, she frequently spends fifteen hours a week in rehearsal and performance. The theater has become a second home to her, and her friendships there are among the most important in her life. Because of Renee's interest, other members of her family have also become involved with the Family Theater. Her mother has begun working on costumes and helps with transportation. Her father ushers at performances. Her younger brother, Derek, attends every rehearsal and performance, and now wants to start creative dramatics. The whole family listens to Renee rehearse her lines at home. There is no predicting exactly how this interest will influence Renee's later life, but it will undoubtedly have an effect, if only as an exciting and involving cooperative experience. She thinks now that she wants to take up dance, and if she gets a scholarship, she may start lessons so she can get a part in the spring musical next year.

Special Arrangements

Organizations can offer a lot, but quite often families find they can use their own ingenuity to set up better activities for their children. Special arrangements can be made to match a child's interest or skill level, to fit a family's schedule, or to meet the needs of a group of children.

Families who live in rural areas often *must* make special arrangements if children are to have an interesting and challenging out-of-school life. Parents in such communities have to organize their own networks in order to make it possible for children to have creative dance, guitar, or swimming lessons, or a teacher of calligraphy or cooking, or for children to go on excursions to distant museums, wildlife sanctuaries, or archeological sites. The local post office or the country store may be the place to post notices, find out about other parents and children, and pick up news and information about local resources.

Special arrangements can sometimes help families solve time, money, and transportation problems. For example, a music teacher may be willing to give lessons at a child's home. Sitters with special talents might be willing to provide lessons in addition to child care. One sitter was hired to provide two hours of cartoon drawing instruction each week. In another family, a high school soccer player spent his summer taking care of three children and working on soccer skills with them. Some adults are willing to share services. In a suburban neighborhood, one family was responsible for transporting children to lessons at 3:30 P.M., and a member of the second family picked them up at 5:30 P.M. Special arrangements can allow for greater flexibility in scheduling. For example, it may be easier to rearrange sessions when a child is sick or has an exam coming up.

There are other advantages to such individualized programs; they can be home-based or within walking distance of home. Children often develop a new network of friends — they get to know people within their own community as they become involved in cooperative ventures with people of all ages. The social

environment is generally smaller, more personal, and less pressured than in organized groups. But the most exciting aspects of these arrangements is that it gives parents the opportunity to expose their children to excellence, and through these experiences, children sometimes feel the pulse of the real world.

However, special arrangements can also have definite drawbacks. The most obvious is that flexibility becomes a weakness of the arrangement, and the entire set-up which took so much energy to organize may simply fall apart. Sometimes the working agreements are so vague that misunderstandings occur. Furthermore, if an adult is in charge, he or she may be in an ambiguous situation, since a given child's behavior may be a problem and the adult may be unsure how far his or her authority extends. Another drawback of special arrangements is that they require work and a sensitivity to other people in order to keep them going. Frequent phone calls, reminders, written instructions, and expressions of gratitude become essential.

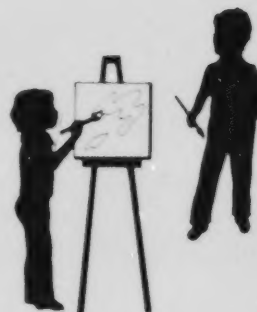
In order to give a perspective on the many kinds of special arrangements for children that other families have set up, there follows a series of vignettes. These arrangements were devised to meet various families' special needs.

Benjamin, who was editor of his college paper, taught his younger brother writing and editing skills. He was able to do this because he lived at home and commuted to college. His brother Timmy, ten years younger than Benjamin, was keenly interested in the college newspaper. Every week Benjamin assigned Timmy a project. During a six-month period Timmy completed a variety of writing projects: he wrote some short stories and assisted Benjamin on several journalism assignments, including interviewing their next door neighbor and reviewing a school play. Benjamin was elated by Timmy's interest and his ability to learn, and Timmy was honored by Benjamin's attention and enthusiasm. Two years later, they were still writing together.

•

A group of interested citizens in a small town volunteered to develop an enrichment program for children. They planned and conducted after-school workshops for children in painting, creative writing, woodworking, and collage making. They persuaded the town selectmen to allocate \$100 to cover expenses. The program lasted for one year, and the children's work was displayed during the town's fall festival.

Susan's friend Geneva, a watercolor artist, worked with Susan's son Cliff and his friend every other week. Geneva was interested in the dynamics of teaching children and did not take any money for instructing them. She introduced the two boys to ways of appreciating and interpreting the aesthetics of the world around them. They sometimes went on field trips to paint. Geneva chose a theme for each trip, like trees, boats, or fences and walls. While they were studying the details of each theme, they were also learning about color, composition, and perspective. The arrangement lasted for two years. Then, both boys joined an art center program.



Mrs. Burroughs, a homemaker, placed a classified ad in the community newspaper expressing interest in sharing her rug-hooking skills with children. Her fee was \$8 for each two-hour session. One mother had her first child find three friends to take lessons with Mrs. Burroughs. Each of the girls successfully completed small throw rugs for their bedrooms.

When Allison was ten, she took a cooking class at the 4-H summer camp. She loved it so much that her parents decided to help her learn to make bread and pastry. They found a woman with a catering business who was willing to let Allison cook with her on Saturdays. After a year, Allison was turning out five or six pies at a time, making walnut tortes, and baking maple cookies. She began to sell her products at the weekly Farmers' Market, and by the time she was thirteen, her products were so popular that she accepted orders at home and had a thriving business.

Special People — And Extended Day Care

In middle childhood, children need to build relationships with adults other than their own parents in order to channel their energies. Instructors and coaches can help children develop skills and encourage them to work toward excellence. Parents hire teachers and coaches to teach gymnastics, swimming, flute — whatever it is their child has shown a genuine interest in pursuing. Sitters and extended day care staff provide a safe environment for children to be with other people while parents are at work. Whoever these adults may be, parents must be concerned with the kinds of people they are.

Instructors

In choosing an instructor, first look for expertise. Who teaches flute? Call your friends. Ask people. Who is the best instructor in tap dancing? Where is the best teaching center for baton twirling in town? Then look for teachers with either intuitive or explicit knowledge of children and a love of teaching. It is not enough to have a figure skater teach your child skating if she neither likes children nor appreciates the levels of accomplishment that may be expected of a child.

In the initial phase of your family's relationship with an instructor, try to assess the instructor's reliability, knowledge of his or her field, and rapport with the child. Is the instructor enthusiastic, flexible, and engaging enough to get the child going? Is the instructor fairly dependable about keeping appointments? Does a sense of camaraderie and respect develop between instructor and pupil? Does the child like and look forward to the lessons or experiences? If the answers to many of these questions are "No," you should investigate. Of course, every parent wants his child to follow through and knows that lessons are not always fun, but negative responses to these questions are a signal. The instructor may not be the right person.

Suggestions for Interviewing Instructors

1. What are the age, physical, and reading requirements for taking these lessons?
2. Do you expect the child to practice? If so, how much?
3. Do you have any suggestions for parents to assist in children's practice at home?
4. What expectations do you have for a child after one year of lessons?
5. Do you have any ideas on how to keep children's interests alive?
6. Do you have periodic recitals? Are any children left out?
7. How long is each lesson? What is the cost? How does one pay?
8. Do you teach individual or group lessons? How many children are likely to be in a group?
9. What kind of child most benefits from taking these lessons?
10. How long have you been teaching? Can you tell me a little about your background and qualifications?
11. How do you teach?
12. What other skills and abilities may develop by participating in this endeavor?



Later, if your child becomes serious about the endeavor, ask still more searching questions of the instructor. What is his or her educational background, training, and real level of expertise in the field? What is the instructor's reputation among other professionals in the field? Does the child appear to be achieving at a rate appropriate for his talent and age? No amount of interviewing can substitute for first-hand observation. Try to visit other children's lessons, group performances, rehearsals, or practice sessions.

Coaches

Coaches also have an important influence on children's lives during these years. Community-sponsored and private coaches lead team and individual sports, such as gymnastics, karate, soccer, football, track or golf. If parents are hiring a private coach, they can probably interview that person. The coach's attitude on winning and losing and beliefs about the capability of girls are two essential points to discuss. Some private coaches have firm convictions about penalties for missed lessons and practice sessions, so ask about this, too. If parents are arranging for children to participate in community-sponsored sports, they have little, if any, choice among coaches. However, it is a good idea to go and observe practice sessions and games. Through these observations you can usually determine what the coaches' attitudes are toward victory and their welcome to girls on the teams.

Andrew, although he enjoyed baseball, did not excel at the sport. However, he was one of the players fortunate enough to have Manny as his coach in the free community-sponsored baseball league. Manny, an enthusiastic college student majoring in physical education, attempted to ensure that each young player enjoyed and understood the game; he gave pep talks, showed films, invited professionals to visit, and had a team party at his house. Manny's excitement and commitment inspired the players to perform to the best of their ability during weekly practice sessions and games. Manny, the most sought-after and appreci-



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ated coach, was treated to lunch and presented with a gift by his team at the end of the season. The young coach, in turn, awarded each team member a plaque. Andrew was presented with the "Most Improved Player" award. This inspired him to attend baseball camp the next season, to go to numerous baseball clinics throughout the year, and to play baseball for many years thereafter.

Suggestions for Interviewing Coaches

1. In a season, how many "games" are there? How many practice sessions are there?
2. What time of day and how long is each game or practice session?
3. What are the age and physical requirements?
4. What kind of child most benefits from being involved?
5. What are the costs for the various aspects of it?
6. How do you encourage good sportsmanship among players?
7. Are your expectations different for boys and girls? If so, how?
8. How do you determine who will be on the starting team?
9. How do you decide how long each child will play?
10. How important is it to have a winning team? How important should it be for the players?
11. What do you do to help further the growth of a "natural athlete" or an "uncoordinated" child?

Sitters

An important resource for families are people who can keep children company. As a rule, sitters and child care providers are simply asked to ensure a safe, structured environment in which children can play, grow and experiment. For children in middle childhood, however, a sitter should be both reliable and energetic, a person who can take a child to a swimming lesson, ride a bus with a child to go shopping for a birthday present, or work with several children on making pretzels. Families decide when they need a sitter by considering a child's age, maturity and temperament, the family's afternoon schedule, the safety of the neighborhood, and the number of hours the child would otherwise be alone.

For six- to twelve-year-olds, you can discard traditional stereotypes of sitters. Consider male and female, young or mature candidates, and those with a cultural and ethnic background different from the child's. You might now actively seek a sitter whose own special interests could intrigue your child. Does the person know batik or macrame? Carpentry or furniture design? Book-writing and binding? Sailing and swimming? Tennis or baseball?

Obviously a sitter must be someone a child can enjoy. Essential qualities include having a genuine interest in children this age, a sense of humor, and an ability to provide leadership and set limits in an authoritative, yet nonpunitive manner. Parents who have good working relationships with sitters find it is necessary to articulate the sitter's responsibilities. In hiring and evaluating sitters, children should be included. Suggested questions are provided in the chart (page 109), to assist in the interview.

There are a number of issues to resolve once a potential sitter has been identified. Obviously compensation is an important one. Parents must discuss the amount and frequency of payment, and form — cash or check. Additional issues include whether the sitter will care for the child at your home or elsewhere, and if your child will be cared for alone or with other children. You should explain whether you offer any unusual benefits, what your expectations

are regarding additional services, vacations, illness, and bad weather. Who provides transportation, to what places, and when? If the sitter provides his or her own transportation, do you reimburse travel expenses?

Parents and sitters together should set up policies for emergency procedures, including the signing of medical consent forms, listing people to contact in case of emergency, and agreeing on procedures for answering telephone calls and opening the door for strangers. It is also important to devise a method to monitor the child's and the parents' feelings and responses to the sitter's performance and to discuss them with the sitter. Meetings between sitter and parent should transpire on a regular basis.

Firing is always difficult, but sometimes parents must confront the fact that a sitter is unsatisfactory. In such a circumstance, remember this is a business arrangement, and your child's welfare is at stake. Discuss problems candidly, if possible. Act in the best interest of your child.



JON GOFF, Boston Children's Museum

Suggestions for Interviewing Potential Sitters

1. I need a sitter to care for my children, ages ____, ____, and ____, the following hours each week. The pay is ____ per hour. Are you interested in this job?
2. What is your experience with children this age?
3. What kinds of activities would you like to do with children?
4. What kinds of activities did you especially enjoy as a child?
5. What sports do you enjoy? Which ones are you willing to share with children?
6. What are your hobbies and interests? Are you willing to share some of them? What are some of the things you like best?
7. What are some of the ways in which you set limits and discipline children this age?
8. Are you able to help children with school subjects?
9. Do you smoke?
10. Are you willing to cook?
11. Can you help us with transportation?
12. What are your career goals?

Extended Day Care

An important resource which parents might investigate is child care programs that offer care before school, after school and during school vacations and holidays. The two primary types are family day care in the provider's home and center-based care.

A number of school systems are involved in providing before and/or after-school child care. These "extended day enrichment" programs, as they are sometimes called, allow children to do arts and crafts, complete homework, and play team sports or individual games in a relaxed environment. Care for school-age children is also being provided by a number of community groups: park and recreation departments, churches, Ys, human service organizations, local parent groups, civic organizations, and nonprofit agencies. Supervised playgrounds and libraries, block parent projects, or special drop-in centers are also options to consider. Finally, parents may be interested in designing, developing, and operating their own after-school program. One book that gives excellent guidelines for such programs is *School-Age Child Care: An Action Manual*, published by a team headed by Michelle Seligson at Wellesley College Center for Research on Women in Wellesley, Massachusetts. The book provides specific information as to getting started, implementation, managing the program, and daily operation, all of which is especially useful for groups concerned with school-age children.

Special Times

Special times are those moments in every week, month, and season when school-age children and their families do things together. Some families involve other families or children's friends in their special times. These times can be in the home or out in the community; they can introduce a new interest to children and their parents; or they can expand the child's or the family's interests.

Special times that take place within the day-to-day routine range from a child watching an educational television program about African wildlife with an adult to visiting an art museum to see an exhibit that may relate to a child's stated interests. Many times, a relaxed atmosphere stimulates conversations between a child and an adult, conversations that might not transpire during

the usual frenetic schedule of many daily lives. As families try out various ways of spending time together, the joy of sharing experiences becomes apparent, as does the value of collaborating with relatives and friends.

The key to making special times really special is for parents and children to do things in which they are truly interested. There is nothing more dreary than a family of grimly determined parents and whining, draggy children marching through a national monument or a museum. This scene is a familiar one, however, because parents occasionally are drawn into an endeavor because they think they *ought* to pursue it, not because anyone in the family is actually interested. So start where you are — both literally, in your own home and community, and figuratively, in your own interests and in the interests of your child. Then the special activities will grow naturally, although they will lead in unexpected directions. Some of the many activities which a family may engage in together — either in the home, in the community, or beyond — are highlighted in this section.

The first place where families develop their special times is right where they live — in their own homes. Children and parents together can enjoy simple but out-of-the-ordinary projects like making popcorn and sprinkling it with parmesan cheese. What are other simple, special activities families do? They start seeds together in the early spring, take care of pets (build a dog house, or even give the dog a bath), make up and put on puppet shows, build a block fortress, bake apple crisp.

Every Sunday night, eleven-year-old Brett and his father made dinner for the family. They enjoyed the time together and the accomplishment of making a "fancy" meal. They sometimes shopped together so they could revise their menu to take advantage of seasonal specials. The two took responsibility for the entire dinner, including clean-up. Brett has become so interested in cooking that he has begun making chocolate animals, which he sells to neighbors and other children.

Some families routinely schedule a family night — time to be together.

The Elliots chose Friday as their designated family evening, but circumstances occasionally required substituting another night. Each of the five family members took turns selecting and scheduling an appropriate event. One week Mrs. Elliot planned for them to build a book shelf. She bought the materials, and on Friday night each member of the family participated in the woodworking process: cutting, nailing, sanding, and staining to finish the shelf. For his week, Mr. Elliot chose a funny play for the family to read aloud. Paula, thirteen, made arrangements for the family to attend a free concert on the town Common. Ten-year-old Adam found a recipe for home-made pizza and bought the ingredients. The family prepared and then ate pizza while they viewed a segment of a television mini-series on World War II. Eric, age six, asked his mother to help him arrange for the family to dine at an Italian restaurant in a neighboring city. Every week the family had an activity to anticipate and each member contributed creative ideas. Some evenings did not work as well as these instances, but many were very successful.

Other special times evolve naturally when parents expose children to their own interests, hobbies, and work. With a little extra thought, many adult activities can be adapted to suit children's abilities. These times are not always programmed into the family calendar; they don't always have to be. A father's professional interest in industrial archeology naturally leads a child into learning about bridge construction or water power. What might have been just the parent's private domain becomes an area of interest to the whole family.

Bringing children to a parent's place of work creates many opportunities for learning and special times. The child gains an understanding of what the parent does during the hours away from home. A visit to a mother's architectural firm may spark her

son's interest in design, or a visit to the father's printing shop may provide his daughter with the opportunity to use her imagination.

Jocelyn, age nine, has been visiting her father's printing shop regularly on weekends for the past four years. She had learned the names of dozens of subtle colors like "aquamarine" and "carnation pink" by stacking the paper bins. Jocelyn enjoyed inventing her own names for colors like "Mint Green" and "Vomit Yellow." As she learned to spell, she made rubber stamps for printing on ink pads. "What will I do today?" was her favorite stamp. Her first "professional" job was making tags for her school fair.

For seven-year-old Charlie, Saturdays have been days to look forward to as being special. Charlie's father, a real estate developer in a large metropolitan area, worked long hours each week, and his mother also worked outside the home. The parents made a point of bringing Charlie with them to the site where his father was



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working on a shopping center. After viewing the site, Charlie would contribute his point of view on the progress of the projects. The family shared many conversations during the one-hour ride each way to and from the site. The day was always highlighted with a late afternoon lunch at their favorite Greek restaurant. Charlie has been involved in this endeavor for three years and enjoys it.

Other examples of children becoming involved in their parents' interests are easy to find. Children become intrigued and can easily grasp the essentials of adult activities when parents find ways to include them.

Politics can provide stimulation, excitement, and learning for a child in the same way it does for adults. In one case, an uncle asked his seven-year-old nephew to come along when he was campaigning for city council. He found the child to be wonderful company and the child loved soliciting nomination signatures, holding campaign posters, and handing out leaflets. The child became intrigued with the electoral process and the structure of state government. Later, with his uncle (a defeated candidate), he visited the state capitol to observe the Senate in session.

Bird watching might seem to be of little interest to young children. Yet Matthew frequently took his two children with him to a bird sanctuary in a vast old cemetery. The three often got there before dawn, and the children became avid bird watchers. They were as excited as the local naturalist when a blue heron was found nesting in the cemetery. At their own home, the children built simple bird feeding equipment and kept the feeders supplied. As the children got older, this family took vacations that involved camping and bird watching on a Caribbean island.

For a family fortunate enough to be able to travel together to a foreign country, it is often amazing how quickly children can become immersed in another language and culture. A family

decided to arrange a summer house exchange with a family in the south of France. All winter, the American family worked on learning French and studying the history and culture of the Provence region. When they got to France, they were all pleased at how well their winter's study had prepared them to enjoy their month in France.

Photography is not traditionally considered a child's activity, but a nine-year-old girl who was given an inexpensive camera was so interested that she quickly mastered the basics of exposure, distance, film types, and lighting effects. She and her grandfather began taking "picture walks" together. The beauty of sunsets over water, snow-covered trees, and mountain roads with fall foliage were captured on film. Later the girl felt that she had developed visual sensitivity at an early age.

For the Edwards, visiting the country fair each year was a big event. One year, the family made an all-out effort for the fair. Mr. Edwards entered the family in a number of contests: baking, sewing, flower arranging, and canning. Each child prepared an entry for at least one competition, and one child brought a seventy-eight-pound pumpkin he had grown. At the fair, the family attended the livestock show, rode the carnival rides and went to the other exhibits to get ideas for the following year.

Children's interests are another, equally rich source of ideas for special times. Parents who are keen listeners discover that children during these years have an abundance of ideas, thoughts, and suggestions about things they want the family to do. Their ideas come from what they are studying in school, what they hear other children talking about, what they read about in the newspapers, what they see on television, and their own developing interests.

For example, a family may notice that every few evenings a child mentions that she is learning about Native Americans or life in the colonial period. This clue may lead parents to the library to

find guidebooks or to local archeological or historical sites. Children frequently provide such clues to their parents, and it is up to parents to formulate specific ways to respond to their children's interests, by organizing trips, tours, and visits.

A walking tour, visiting homes and churches which have historical significance, could be an adventure. Another possibility might be to walk through a cemetery and examine the names and epitaphs on grave stones. A driving tour could take a family to an archeological site. An industrial craft tour is another possibility. Perhaps an existing industry perpetuates an antique craft like wooden boat building, or perhaps a small blacksmith forge still makes andirons. Seeing these processes brings the textbook chapters on "colonial crafts" to life. A visit to a museum of fine arts to view paintings, sculpture, or period furniture helps a child imagine life in a remote time. Museums are places to see, hear, and even sometimes touch artifacts that are a tangible link between the living present and the past.

Sometimes a child's passionate and almost insatiable interest in an activity can influence how a whole family spends its time and can lead parents and other children into new relationships.

When Ian was seven, he and his family spent the spring school vacation in the Florida Keys. Ian was introduced to salt-water fishing and he loved it. He quickly mastered the intricacies of the fishing rods and reels, baiting the hooks, and removing fish from the line. He got up early in the morning and hung around the docks, watching commercial fishermen go out, peering into the water to see the scrawled filefish beside the piling. By the time the week in Florida was over, Ian had learned the name of every fish they caught, and he had convinced his family to take a tour of a coral reef in a glass-bottomed boat. He also bought himself a National Parks Service book on fish.

When the family came home, Ian began checking out books about fish and fishing from his school and neighborhood libraries.

Ian found out about an organized group called "Urban Anglers" that held day-long demonstrations at the local river.

For his eighth birthday, Ian's grandmother took him for an all-day whale watch. During the family's summer vacation in the country, they bought Ian a fishing rod and he tried to go fishing every day. Back home, he got his mother to take him to bookstores, and he soon knew the names of seven or eight books on fresh- and salt-water fishing and big-game fishing that he wanted, as well as a dozen magazines for fishermen. One by one that summer, fall, and winter, Ian acquired many of these books. One August afternoon, Ian looked in the Yellow Pages under "F." He discovered an ad for fishing with the "Quincy Bay Flounder Fleet" and dialed the number. It turned out that the flounder boats go out twice a day, and for \$5 each, one could spend four hours fishing. They went. When the bluefish were running in the Atlantic off the coast of Rhode Island, he talked his father into taking him, and they spent an entire day in a chartered fishing vessel, pulling in bluefish. Ian's biggest catch, thirty-two-inches long, was the largest fish caught on the boat that day.

In the winter, he read everything he could on ice fishing, but he could not convince anyone to go with him. Still, he received a tackle box and a fish tank for Christmas. By now, his knowledge of fish and fishing was far greater than that of his parents, and he needed contact with other knowledgeable adults to satisfy his curiosity. The proprietor at Pete's Bait Shop was persuaded to take him along on several excursions. Ian frequently was taken to the New England Aquarium. He also went several times to see the Peabody Museum's exhibit on fish.

This child's powerful desire to learn about fish and to try out various kinds of fishing seemed almost to propel the family into new connections with every community they lived in or visited. Almost naturally, it seemed, Ian took advantage of established organizations, libraries, bookstores, museums, the Yellow Pages, resource lists in magazines, and informal contacts with all kinds of other people.

Sometimes families will try an excursion into the community just because it sounds interesting. Perhaps no one in the family has a special connection to the activity, but everyone thinks it sounds intriguing. In every community there are companies and places that are fun to visit and observe. Many families already visit parks, historic sites, or recreation areas together, for picnics or outdoor games. But there are other places most of us overlook that can also offer interesting outings, and that welcome children. Your local newspaper is probably the best source of information. Almost every city has a guidebook, some specifically written for families to use with children. There may be one for your city. The following list suggests some possible community trips families could arrange. Also check the chart, *Yes, No, and Maybe*, especially the sections called "Developing Special Interests" and "Places to Visit" for additional ideas.

Through special times, parents provide their children with a passport into their community, and open doors into worlds that might otherwise be closed to them. When parents and children use their special times together effectively and imaginatively, the quality of these hours filters through and influences all other out-of-school time.

More Places to Visit

- Visit a newspaper to see the newsroom, layout area, and printing presses.
- Observe an assembly line at an automobile manufacturing plant.
- Visit an ice cream factory to watch the cream mixing in a giant vat and the hot fudge bubbling in the syrup kitchen.
- Watch chocolate being melted, molded, foiled, and packed at a candy factory.
- Have fun at a costume company that stocks outfits for Scarlet O'Hara, Frankenstein, and Darth Vader.

- See a city official or the mayor at work when touring your city hall.
- Visit the State House; watch legislators debate, view the Governor's office, listen to the clerk explain how a bill becomes law.
- Tour the Experimental Stations of the Department of Environmental Management and Engineering. They may demonstrate how air and ground water are analyzed for various pollutants and how they conduct experiments to detect hazardous wastes and tests for shellfish poisoning.
- Visit one of several experimental stations in the U.S. and Canada where new hybrid varieties of flowers and vegetables are tested and rated.
- See turn-of-the-century steam-powered equipment which still runs a number of municipal water pumping stations. Visitors might also view smaller, high-speed gas turbine pumps, or learn about the history of municipal water supply systems.
- Observe a U.S. Post Office, one of many federal agencies that opens its doors to the public. Witness the process by which millions of pieces of mail every day are sorted, weighed, and forwarded to their destinations. Look over the stamp collections covering a variety of interests which are available at modest cost.
- Note how the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife operates fish hatcheries where rainbow or brook trout or other species are raised for stocking brooks and streams.
- Walk the trails of national wildlife preserves to view local flora and animals.
- Learn about air traffic control systems and radar equipment by talking to pilots and navigators at an Air Force Base.
- Visit ships and watch patrol maneuvers at a U.S. Coast Guard Station.
- Discover how Directory Assistance works and how operator-assisted calls are handled at a telephone company.



Computers — A Special Resource

Computers are everywhere in our environment, touching almost every facet of modern life. Your children are exposed to computers frequently — in grocery stores, banks, game parlors, etc. In the future more and more jobs will require at least some familiarity with computers. Computer literacy is fast becoming one of the basic requirements for children to be competent and well-rounded in our society.

Parents who want to learn more about the profound influence computers can have on a child's world should read the visionary work of Professor Seymour Papert of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In *Mindstorms*, Papert forecasts that in the future microcomputers will be as useful in the classroom as the pencil.

Learning about computers is something that parents and children can do together. In most communities, there are a variety of resources available to families who want to expose their children to computers. Here are some of the ways to gather more information about computers:

1. Telephone local schools and ask if they offer appropriate computer courses or workshops.
2. Read up on the topic. Most libraries, newsstands, and bookstores have a number of computer magazines and books.
3. Contact community institutions such as libraries and museums. Determine what resources, if any, are offered to children interested in learning about computers.
4. Inquire if local religious groups, the Y, community and adult education centers, and local colleges offer computer instruction for children. The Yellow Pages may provide other ideas.
5. Search for camps that offer computer instruction to children. A word of caution, however: be a careful consumer. When selecting

a computer camp, be sure to interview the staff and be certain to pinpoint the goals of the camp.

6. Talk to other people who have home computers or whose children already use computers.

7. Consider visiting a local computer user group; talk with knowledgeable members. In some areas computer user groups and computer clubs have developed special subgroups oriented to children and families. They will probably be delighted to discuss what has worked well for their members. To find out how to contact nearby user groups, check a current issue of the *Classroom Computer Learning Directory* or a similar journal. Young People's LOGO Association is a national group that has a newsletter, a software exchange library, and a growing number of local chapters.

8. Visit a recommended computer store and ask for demonstrations of specific software (programs) and hardware (machinery) that could be of interest to you and your children.

The astounding recent proliferation of computer machinery and software is enough to confuse anyone, and the inexperienced person may feel overwhelmed. Typically, locating high quality software that is appropriate for children in this age range is the most difficult task for parents. To help you learn about specific software, some information about a number of well-known and useful software packages is provided below. All of this software is currently available and can normally be used on one or more of the most popular home computers. The software reviewed here has won the acclaim of children, parents, teachers, developmental psychologists, and educational computer experts. However, more advanced software is being developed at a rapid rate, and next year's choices will be even better. The resource section on computers and children (Appendix C, page 266) provides references that can help you gather additional information and keep up to date in this fast-changing area.



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It is useful to think about educational software as falling into three broad categories: drill and practice, games and simulations, and tools for creative programming.

Drill and Practice

There are many programs available in this category. Most display a problem on the screen and ask for an answer, usually a choice from several possibilities displayed. The child is told whether the answer is correct or incorrect. The computer's response can be in the form of a statement, graphics, music, points scored, or some other form of reward. Spelling, foreign languages, states and capitals, geography, and history are some of the topics addressed by programs of this type. According to Papert, computer-based instruction usually consists of putting children through their paces, providing drill and dispensing information to passive learners. When the technology is used this way, it can be viewed as an electronic system of flash cards that routinely teaches and reviews the same old lesson in a traditional way.

There are some well-respected programs that fall into this category. *Rocky's Boots*, by The Learning Company, involves the learner in building animated logic machines and learning about computer circuitry and logic. The excellent animation makes learning the sophisticated content fun. *Mastertype*, by Lightning Software, is a game designed to teach touch typing. Designed in an arcade game format, the typist must quickly type the letters or words appearing on the screen in order to fight off alien invaders.

Games and Simulations

There are many types of computer games; some provide little opportunity for learning while others can be powerful, exciting, and educational. One extreme is the traditional arcade-type game, and most educators and parents contend that these have little educational value. However, children consistently report that they *love* playing these games. Parents must recognize that these games provide an element of excitement and pure fun for a child, and

they can initiate and sustain a child's interest in computer interaction.

At the other extreme are games which are called simulations. With these games, the child enters a simulated world in which he/she takes on a role, perhaps as explorer or detective, and is actively involved in imaginative, creative ways. When solving a problem, the child is often required to employ creative reasoning skills or to work cooperatively with a group. *Snooper Troops Case Number 1*, *Snooper Troops Case Number 2*, and *In Search of the Most Amazing Thing*, all by Spinnaker Software Corporation, are examples of games that engage the learner. Another game in this category is *Agent U.S.A.*, by Scholastic, in which a player travels around the United States by catching trains in 100 different cities. The sound effects, music, city skylines, and format are exciting with the hidden educational benefit of learning states and their capitals.

Tools for Creative Programming

A computer tool allows a child to do a familiar task more easily and effectively. Here are some common tools:

Word processors allow a child to write efficiently with the computer. Typically they permit the child to easily correct mistakes, manipulate words, sentences, and paragraphs, and format the text in different ways so the final draft can be exactly as desired. If a paper contains mistakes, a child can edit the piece and quickly get an error-free version without having to re-type the entire paper. Because of the ease of making corrections, most children find writing compositions a more enjoyable, rewarding task. As a result, many children begin to enjoy writing and, in fact, write longer and more creative papers. Some word processors also incorporate a spelling checker. *The Bank Street Writer*, by Scholastic, is an example of an inexpensive, easy-to-use word processor. The directions are displayed at the top of the screen, and the screen is set up so that text is easy to read. The package includes a tutorial and a manual.

Database management systems, or filing systems, allow a child to enter, store, and retrieve information. Typically, the information can be manipulated in different ways, for example sorted alphabetically or numerically. The entire database or just parts of it can be updated, edited, or printed out. Children can create and use files of their friends' addresses, birthdays, and phone numbers, their books, or places to visit in a city. Collections of stamps or coins can be filed. *Notebook*, by Window, is an example of a simple-to-use, inexpensive database program.

Graphics tools allow a child to easily create colorful, detailed drawings. Sometimes the results can be stored, changed, printed, or used in other programs. Children can express themselves freely because this media is so adaptable and responsive. The *Koala Pad*, by Koala Industries, is a graphics pad that allows the user to draw pictures using a stylus. The artist can change the thickness of the "brush," the texture of a chosen area, the colors, or even work on a magnified section of the drawing. With *Painter Power*, by Microlab, the child uses the keyboard, joystick, or paddle to create an original design. There are beginner and advanced modes, and work can be saved.

Music-making tools allow a child to creatively write music. *Delta Music*, by Spinnaker, is an easy-to-use music-making program. Without previous music theory experience, a child can create musical themes using traditional note representation. *Songwriter* by Scarborough Systems is another program that allows the novice, as well as the experienced, to write, save, play, and change songs.

General purpose programming languages help a child to learn logic and develop problem-solving skills. With instruction, a child learns to implement original ideas, take control over the computer in a more direct way, and gain experience using logical and organizational skills.

Many computers come with the language BASIC. Manuals are included or are available to help the learner, and there are hundreds of instructional books available on this language.

Although BASIC was not originally designed for children, many instructors now teach children BASIC with good results.

Papert designed the language LOGO especially for children. This popular graphics-based language allows a child to take an active role in learning. There are now several different versions of LOGO on the market. Some include only the Turtle Graphics portion of the language, which allows children to write programs that draw pictures. *Delta Drawing* by Spinnaker is an example of a Turtle Graphics package that is easy to learn and is a useful first step. Others, including the Terrapin, Krell, and Apple versions of LOGO, employ the full implementation of the language. With LOGO a child can create poetry, word games, secret codes, and physics simulations in addition to drawing pictures.

Time, Transportation, and Money

All families must work within some constraints of time pressure, transportation, and limited funds. However, families often exhibit enormous creativity in planning children's out-of-school lives to honor each child's interests. It is true that to accomplish this, sometimes compromises, adjustments, and sacrifices have to be made by busy parents and children. But persistent and determined families can usually find ways to ease the time pressures, solve logistical problems, and stretch their limited funds. One way that families do this is to trade off one of these constraints against another. For example, a parent may not have the time to provide transportation to a certain event, but can find money to make it possible, instead. There are often solutions to these problems when parents think about them creatively.

Time

"I don't have the time" is a common lament. In truth, many parents *don't* have the time, given their busy schedules. In considering the issue of children's out-of-school time, parents initially cannot imagine how they can build and carry out a

complex schedule for each of their children. Furthermore, children's spur-of-the-moment requests often must meet the same response, "I don't have the time." How do families solve the problems of fitting more activities into already crowded schedules? In actuality, no family does all they want to, nor could they. There *isn't* enough time. Yet, there are strategies for easing time pressures.

It is important, first of all, to distinguish between not having the time and not wanting to do something. It eases a family's sense of time pressure to realize that it really is not too little time that makes certain activities impossible, but instead, that some activities are of no real interest or value to the family. Remember, too, that it is not necessary to say, "Yes," to a child's every whim, for that turns parents into harried, self-denying martyrs and children into people who cannot bear to be denied anything.

A second strategy is to distinguish between spur-of-the-moment requests and long-term needs. When a child gets home from school at 3:30 P.M., and then calls his mother at work and asks to be taken to buy a new book or game that afternoon, most busy parents would reply, "We don't have time today." On the other hand, when a parent and child have planned ahead to use a late afternoon to go for a lesson and do errands which include the bookstore, this request fits into the fabric of the day. Children need to feel that even though a spur-of-the-moment request cannot always be granted, it need not be forgotten.

A third strategy is to build the family schedule together by the season. Then within the family's time constraints, each child's serious interests and needs will be met. Each child will understand that during the season and within the weeks, some of their interests are built into the family schedule.

A fourth strategy is to discuss the use of time with children. On a Saturday morning, parents can help children understand the use of the day by showing when everyone has free time and when each person has plans. On Sunday night, parents can review the after-school calendar for the week. In addition, each evening the next day's plans also need to be reviewed.

A fifth strategy is to consider special arrangements that ease the time pressures on the family. Look for a music teacher who will come to your home, request evening or weekend lessons, and consider alternate week arrangements.

A sixth strategy is to explore cooperative connections. Whenever possible, ask the question "Can we do this with another person?"

And finally, consider if it is possible to combine a certain activity with something else that needs to be done, or if more than one child's needs can be met with one trip.

Transportation

Transportation is often a critical factor in determining whether a child can pursue a particular activity. It is not easy for children to get around within their world. In fact, transportation arrangements are a source of extreme concern for many families. If a child expresses an interest in handball lessons at a sports center on the far side of town, and there's no way to get her there, handball may be eliminated as an option. Naturally, the transportation available depends greatly on where you live and whether your child is just six or twelve. Public transit, special transportation arrangements and car pools, walking and bicycling are all options.

However, safeguarding your child is paramount. Transportation must be arranged with a realistic appraisal of potential dangers. It is not safe for a child to ride a bike to some places. Also, bike riding might be impossible in the winter when dismissal is close to dark. Some subway rides may be scary or dangerous for an unaccompanied child. Even walking on some rural, suburban, or urban streets is not really safe for children.

As children gain proficiency in navigating around a city and using a public transportation system, a sense of satisfaction develops. Maps and guides can assist in this process. Bookstores, gas stations, town or city halls, chambers of commerce, transportation and travel commissions, and automobile associations are

places where maps of the city and the public transportation systems can be obtained.

Most suburban and rural families who have cars rely on them heavily for children's transportation. However, there is a tendency to overlook the real usefulness and availability of other kinds of transportation. For example, most families don't even keep copies of the schedules for the buses or trains serving their community. It is very useful to collect and file schedules for local buses, trains, subways, or boats.

The traditional private transportation option is car pooling. If one family cannot drive, they can consider offering a service or payment in exchange for someone else's driving. Some newspapers provide free space in their classified advertising section for individuals desiring to share information. Private commercial transportation, such as a taxi or a special transportation system, is also often an option. File the telephone numbers and rate cards of several reliable taxi or mini-bus companies.

If walking is chosen as the means of transportation, children and parents must feel secure. When they walk in some locations, children should be accompanied by an adult. In other places, parents and children should feel secure enough to let a child walk alone. A child should never attempt to walk a new route alone the first time. Someone must take the walk with the child so that all dangers are understood. It is not enough to tell a child in advance what to expect. The walk must be practiced with an adult.

If children are going to be bicycling, careful preparation is essential. Information on safety hints for bicycling can be secured from the many resources in the Appendix under Books and Organizations with Information on Safety, First Aid, and Health (page 311). Before a child begins to ride a bicycle, rules of the road must be thoroughly mastered, the rules must be reviewed periodically, and, of course, a helmet is essential.

Finally, if transportation remains a problem, talk with other parents and consider working together to encourage community officials to look at innovative transportation schedules or systems.



JANE SCHERR

One group of concerned citizens in Lexington, Massachusetts, arrived at a solution. They helped start Lexpress, a community-run transportation system that is particularly useful for children involved in out-of-school activities. Four buses operate on eight regular routes. These buses operate from 7:00 A.M. to 6:30 P.M. The buses stop at all schools, a private, nonprofit recreation center, and the town recreation centers, which include a swimming pool and reservoir. They also will stop to pick up or drop off passengers any place along their routes. Variations in all the routes are made at times to accommodate children's needs, such as attendance at a local winter recreation program. Children can use Lexpress to go to private lessons, the library, the shopping center, or to visit a friend. Such a system may be a possibility in your community.

Money

Parents are often surprised by how much things cost for children. Some activities end up costing so much that most parents, had they known ahead of time, would have said "We can't afford it." Suppose a child is interested in ice hockey and needs equipment. New skates cost a lot, and a new pair is needed each

year; a winter's worth of Saturday morning classes is expensive, and the hockey equipment and uniform are still to be bought. Another child may seem ready to take piano lessons. A one-hour lesson is \$20, and the teacher may recommend a second group lesson once a week for another \$15. The family's inherited upright piano seemed all right for beginning lessons, but for this child, who is serious about the lessons, the teacher recommends buying a better instrument. What starts out as a \$20 a week commitment expands dramatically.

If the child enjoys the activity, and especially if the child begins to take it seriously and to excel, parents willingly give more and more. Often they comment, "It's worth it." As a child progresses and gets better at his or her activity, a family devotes more of its resources to supporting the interest. The typical sequence of responses may run: "We can't afford it," "We can afford part of it," "We *have* to afford it."

Occasionally a child is so committed to an activity and becomes so good that even more significant changes are made in the family budget. Then the family spends more money on teachers, on travel and special classes, on concerts and performances, on better equipment, on camps and special enrichment programs.

If the cost of an activity or a piece of equipment is a deterrent, consider the ingenuity of Leontyne Price's mother. At an early age, Leontyne exhibited musical gifts which were unmistakable. Despite the fact that the family had little money, Mrs. Price arranged for a local voice teacher, Mrs. Hattie McInnis, to give Leontyne lessons. When Mrs. Price could not afford to pay the \$2 weekly fee, she did Miss McInnis's washing and ironing. When it became necessary to buy a piano, Mrs. Price traded in the family victrola as a downpayment.

Few families budget money for children's out-of-school time, but this category can become a significant part of a family's expenditures. Almost no one plans for the price of concert admission tickets, ballet shoes, or special membership fees. For



most people, funds come out of an all-encompassing "miscellaneous" category which has a tendency to disappear quickly.

Some families find it useful to consider what are "luxury items" and to decide whether to reallocate these funds for children's needs. Others will simply find that funds have gone to children's out-of-school life, and that the luxury items have been automatically trimmed. Some families find that they must think about children's out-of-school expenses over an entire year, while others cope with expenses on a seasonal basis, and still other families solve financial problems month by month. Family circumstances may allow a child to participate in an activity with a fee for only a limited period; thereafter, other options have to be found. Many families who would like opportunities or instruction for their children think of inventive methods of payment: child care, catering, editing, painting, wallpapering, and lawn mowing are only a few services which parents and children can offer.

Nine-year-old David, who lives in New England, said he could find a hundred things to do in the warm months, but winter was a different story. "When it's hot out I can swim, ride my bike, and play softball, but in the winter I like to play hockey. My parents plan ahead because the equipment and ice time are very expensive. I'd love to ski and go snow-mobiling, but those things cost too much money."

Karen, a twelve-year-old, reported, "After my sister Claire graduated from college and had a job, she paid for ballet lessons for my little sister Kara and me. Then she went to graduate school, and my father didn't have the money to pay for the lessons. I joined the Saturday morning basketball league while Kara took free music lessons at school and joined the community skating club."

Time, transportation, and money present obstacles to all families, and no one has a "quickie," one-minute solution. But, solutions can often be found, and if you get stuck, talk over your situation with others.

Four working mothers, with a total of six children, worked together to solve transportation, money, and time problems for their children's after-school schedules. These mothers became acquainted attending functions at their children's school. They found they were all paying for child care, transportation, and lessons, and they were all harassed. Together they figured out a cooperative plan that suited the needs of everyone. Their children took gymnastic lessons together one afternoon a week, and another day they attended individual music lessons at the same music school. Kate, one of the mothers, provided transportation from school to gymnastics; afterward Linda, another mother, delivered each of the children to their homes around 5:30 P.M. Each child walked directly to the music school on lesson days. Afterwards they walked together to Toni's house. Toni, who worked at a community college from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M., was home when the children arrived. Additionally, Toni was responsible for the six children two afternoons a week; she sometimes walked them to the skating rink or library in the center of town. A sitter was hired to watch them at Toni's house on the other afternoon. Toni would not accept payment for minding the children, so the other three women collectively paid for the sitter, a house-cleaner for Toni's home once every two weeks, and for her daughter Jessie's gymnastics lessons. In aggregate, the cost for this cooperative venture was considerably less than the separate costs would have been to each individual family. Parents had less stress, and on the whole the children had more interesting lives.

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JANE SCHER

Fostering Independence or The Other 3 Rs:

Resourcefulness, Responsibility,
and Reliability

WITH A BLEND of good planning and intuition, most parents are able to work out quite satisfactory schedules for their children — schedules that weave together organized activities and time for free play. It takes the same combination of planning and understanding to create situations in the home that will foster that critical aspect of growing up — developing independence, or what are called the *other* 3 Rs: resourcefulness, responsibility, and reliability.

Most parents can define independence very easily. It has to do with those magic moments when your child comes to you and says, "Guess what! I did it all by myself!" — whether it was making a peanut butter sandwich or a soufflé, tying shoelaces, riding a two-wheeler alone or repairing a flat on it. Whatever it was, the key words are "by myself."

The Other 3 Rs

RESOURCEFULNESS

1. Being able to find something useful and interesting to do.
2. Remaining interested in one activity for an extended period of time.
3. Finding solutions to problems, and being able to say, "I did it myself!"

RESPONSIBILITY

1. Taking care of oneself.
2. Taking care of one's own possessions.
3. Caring for others.
4. Caring for animals, plants, and the household.

RELIABILITY

1. Ability to complete assigned tasks.
2. Sticking to assigned schedules, following plans.
3. Ability to pay attention and remember.

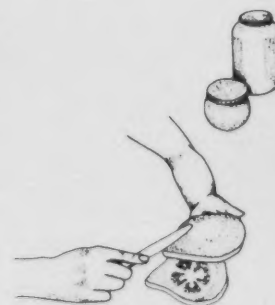
Independent children are able to do things on their own, can accept responsibilities, are not easily bored, and can remain interested in an activity for an extended period of time. Independent children are able to make use of objects and can spin out ideas without constant adult involvement. Children who are independent can create their own inner worlds, and take charge of their own lives for at least part of every day. Children's independence relieves parents of providing all maintenance and entertainment for them.

There is nothing more awful and exhausting than being with a bored, restless, dependent child who needs an adult to answer the perpetual question and wail: "What shall I do? There's nothing to do!" A child who cannot generate activities and needs someone else to fill every empty hour can make adults feel exasperated and emotionally drained. Of course, no child is or should be totally independent; *total* independence is not a goal for adults, either. Still, most parents want to foster independence in their children to a reasonable degree.

Children's independence is made possible by structure. Paradoxically, for children to be independent and self-reliant, parents must provide structures which enable children to function on their own. These structures are created in the physical environment, in the routines of daily schedules and seasonal calendars, and in the expectations parents establish for children's performance.

During middle childhood, children gradually become able to assume more responsibility for themselves. Therefore, parents must applaud each small increment in a child's developing independence. Parents have to be patient. It takes real effort on the part of parents to be consistent in expecting and rewarding responsible behavior. Parents must articulate what they mean by "being responsible." Each family has its own values and cultural heritage, and this obviously influences the kind of responsible behavior they want to encourage.

A word of warning: extreme independence for children is not the goal. For example, it is requiring too much independence of



children to expect them to take care of themselves alone every day from 2:30 P.M. until 6:00 P.M. Although children certainly become more able to provide for themselves alone for longer and longer blocks of time, children between six and twelve are really not able to be in total charge of their free time. They simply do not thrive when they are forced to be so very independent.

Organizing the Household

Children's behavior is influenced by the physical spaces they are in every day. A disorganized household makes many children dependent and unable to function well. In fact, children become overwhelmed unless there is some order to their environment. However, without too much effort, parents can organize their households to give coherence and structure to their children's daily lives. Not only will this eliminate confusion, it is probably the simplest thing parents can do to foster independence in their children. If children know where things are, and if the things they need are within their reach, they can get what they want by themselves, use it independently, and hopefully, put it away too.

Here are some ideas for structuring your living space:

Ideas for the Front Door or Hall Closet

- Attach hooks for coats where children can easily reach them.
- Use wicker baskets, plastic milk cartons, or cardboard boxes for sorting and storing sneakers, flip-flops, mittens, boots, hats, and whatever.
- Remove and store out-of-season clothes.
- Establish a place for children to leave notes for parents from school or from teachers.

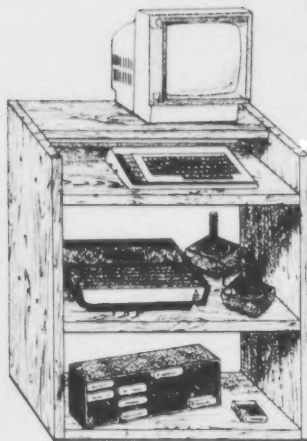
Ideas for the Kitchen

- Choose one accessible “activity” cabinet for storing children’s supplies, including drawing supplies, paints, rubber stamps, graph and construction paper, scissors, tape, string, magic markers, paper clips, and glue. Items such as playing cards and poker chips may also be stored in this area.
- Keep a realistic and up-to-date list of ideas for each child called “Fun Things to Do When There’s Nothing to Do.” Such a list could be kept on the back of the door of the cabinet. Activity books might be stored nearby.
- Choose another accessible cabinet for children’s snack preparations. Include in it plastic cups, flatware and utensils, and dishes that children can use. Also include in this cabinet ingredients for nutritious, no-cook snacks (for example, peanut butter, raisins, rice crackers, dried fruit, nuts, cereal, and granola bars).
- Make recipes available for favorite nutritious, easy-to-make snacks. Try taping an envelope for recipes to the refrigerator door or putting them in a file box.
- Set up telephone message arrangements — include: note pad or chalkboard, pencils, markers, or chalk, phone number list, and phone within reach.



Ideas for the Family Room or Den

- Set up a special reading, practice, and work area for children.
- Designate shelves for children's current reading interests.
- Make sure there is adequate lighting within children's reach.
- Provide children with appropriate reference materials. Include children's dictionaries, references, encyclopedias, atlases, record books, and others.
- Find a place to store magazines children use, such as *Ranger Rick*, *World Magazine*, and *National Geographic*.
- Establish an area, time, and guidelines for watching television.
 - Set up shelves or cabinets for storing children's games.
 - Establish an area for using the home computer if you have one and a place to store software.
 - Sort through the clutter periodically.



Ideas for Children's Rooms

- Have dresser or shelves children can reach.
- Put hooks on the back of the door so that children can easily hang up their own clothes.
- Consider having a storage area with open shelves for sweaters or sweatshirts.
- Provide a hamper or laundry bag for each child.
- Put drawers under beds.
- Arrange clear spaces for reading, studying, listening to music, and sleeping. If possible, have one bed, dresser, desk, bookshelf, chair, and light for each child.
- Put a clock in the room.

- Consider using the closet as a special private play space. Remove the door and place the clothing rod high and across the closet so children can use the space below for playing house, dress-up, or troll heaven.
- Establish a system for storing and keeping favorite stuffed animals, dolls, puppets, guns and helmets. (Secret: rotate toys into and out of storage area in basement, attic, or closet. Make this an occasional event so the child can take "Hoppity" downstairs in exchange for "Sam.")
- Clear out excess clutter periodically.

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Ideas for the Dining Area and the Living Room

- Decide what areas are off limits to children, and be clear about it.
- Make formal dinners more enjoyable for children. By having candlelight or keeping a fish tank in the dining room, you can encourage observation and conversation.
- Store appropriate toys for use in these rooms.
- Integrate children's art into these rooms. Display children's pottery, woodwork, best drawings and paintings, and batik.

Ideas for the Bathroom

- Place towel racks within reach of children.
- Put step stool, if needed, in bathroom.
- Use rubber dish pan or tray to store toys, squirt bottles, and bubble bath.
- Hang a mirror low enough for children's use.

Ideas for Big Equipment

*"Hang it up
where it goes!"*



- Find a place to store and lock big equipment.
- Decide if you need to hang bikes, skis, roller skates, tennis rackets, fishing tackle, and motorcycle helmets on the wall. Purchase stud finder and big hooks and put equipment up off the floor.
- Segregate big pieces of equipment from smaller ones.
- Use athletic bags to store the sports equipment, pads, and uniforms for each sport.

Ideas for Active Play — Indoors and Outdoors

- Think about where rough play could be made possible — basement, corridors, garage, or under-used rooms.
- Save old mattresses and big pillows for children to build with and make things.
- Decide if a piece of furniture is safe for children's rough play.
- Establish a costume box and dress-up area and save interesting and surprising old props, hats, and clothes. Obviously a mirror has to be available.
- Consider if there is a place for an indoor swing, rope cage, hammock, loft, or rope climber.

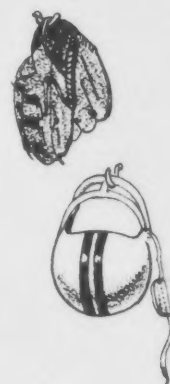


- Figure out where you can set up a basketball net and backboard or hang a tire from a tree.
- Look for an area in which children can design and set up their own garden.
- Locate air hockey, bumper pool, Ping-Pong, and other games in a large, open space.

Ideas for Stocking a Household for Children

A group of adults and children were asked to name the items that they found most useful for children ages six to twelve. Most households contain many of them, but sometimes parents have not identified them as resources for children's independence.

- Balls and outdoor equipment: soccer ball, kickball, baseball, gloves and bats, badminton sets, flashlights, tennis rackets, and other outdoor equipment like swing sets, jungle gym or Frisbees.
- Drawing and art supplies: glue, paste, paper, pencils, pens, crayons, magic markers, watercolor paints, construction paper, scissors, and stickers.
- Dolls and doll houses
- Stuffed animals
- Bicycles
- Blocks, Legos, and other building toys
- Board and card games and puzzles
- Toy cars and trucks
- Cooking supplies and children's cookbooks
- Books and magazines
- Record players and records; tape recorders and cassettes



- Sandbox or sand area; water play toys
- Musical instruments such as a guitar, piano, recorder, flute, or clarinet
- Dress-up clothes and mirror
- Live animals — pets

Establishing Routines

Routines are ways of organizing time and of setting up more or less unvarying procedures in daily life, and over the weekly and seasonal calendars. Children need routines to help them make sense of their time. During the school day, children know that they get up at a certain time in the morning, have breakfast, and go to school. The hours in school are differentiated, and periods of the day are punctuated by changes of subjects and activities. But the hours spent out of school are less easily grasped and conceptualized by children.

Children's questions indicate how eager they are to make sense of time. They ask: How long is it until Halloween? How soon is vacation? How long is it 'til school starts? How old was I then? What time is he coming home tomorrow? How long is he going to stay? Will it happen in the morning, at noon, or night? How much time do I have until bedtime? They keep asking these questions so they can pace themselves within the realities of their time. Giving children clear routines allows them to begin to master a sense of time. Within their sense of how much time they have, they can begin to take responsibility for portioning out time on their own and for being in charge of their own lives.

Almost every family establishes routines of many kinds to enable its members to live together, to plan, to respect each other's needs, and to provide the security of knowing what will happen when. Most families do this so naturally that these routines are not visible to outsiders. But children within an apparently casual

family may be quite clear about what is happening when, and how they fit into the plans.

Generally speaking, however, unless families establish and talk about the organization of time, they fall into conflict and resentment. Parents can best help children understand their routines by talking to them frequently about the family's plans, and in fact, talking should be part of the routine itself.

Sometimes children suffer from a lack of understanding of their routines. For example, one child was not able to understand seasonal, weekly, and daily beginnings and endings within his routine. The issue is not whether there was a routine but whether the child realized it was there. With some children it takes a great deal of talking to clarify routines.

Robert, an eleven-year-old, had an interesting out-of-school life, including visits with friends, soccer practice, camping experiences, sailing lessons, and care for a large menagerie of pets — a dog, a cat, fish, gerbils, and lizards. All of them were animals he wanted and loved. Still, the family's daily life was frequently jolted by this child's sudden, unexpected outbursts of fury. One time his father casually mentioned that Robert's school would be starting in two days. This was not the first time it had been discussed. Robert surprised everyone by throwing his cereal bowl across the room.

Gradually, his parents realized that these periods of turmoil always came at the point of endings or new beginnings. They saw that beginnings were so stressful for Robert that he never anticipated them at all. Simultaneously they, as parents, realized that for him to be independent and self-reliant, they had to spell out every stage of anticipation, endurance, and conclusion in order for him to move through the transitions of the year without tremendous stress.

Children who are restless and bored often are children who don't have a clear understanding of what is happening next. If there is no clear routine to help them comprehend blocks of time

and how that time is organized, they have little mastery of their situation, so they seem dependent and whiny. Also, when children have no idea of how long a certain situation is going to last — say, visiting a parent's office or taking a car trip — they can be neither patient nor resourceful. As a result, parents may hear these familiar complaints and questions: "I'm hungry." "When are we going to go home?" "Let's go." "I'm thirsty." "I hate this place." "How much longer do we have to stay here?" Children without clear routines sometimes drift into such listlessness that they seem to be doing almost nothing. One mother reported that she would find her eight-year-old son lying on the hallway carpet on Saturday afternoons, moaning, "I'm bored. There's nothing to do."

Most families have times when the routine melts away, and everyone sleeps a little later and does different things, and time seems free and easy. Meals may be more casual. There is a delicious freedom when the routine evaporates on Sunday mornings or during vacations. No routine for a child should be so tight that occasional spur-of-the-moment activities are impossible. When the neighbors' Uncle Henry calls and says he is taking his nieces windsurfing and would your child like to come along, the routine may have to be forsaken. Birthday parties, special trips, and special invitations may have to be handled spontaneously.

Families need cycles of organization and loosening of the routine. However, the routine should be the norm; parents use routine as the context for nurturing their children's independence. In fact, unless they have some clear routines, there is little freedom for children or grown-ups. Routines are not constructing, but liberating.

Building Homework into the Routine

Homework must be built into the out-of-school routine. Usually, first and second graders have little or no homework, but by third grade, many children are expected to bring completed homework back to school two or three mornings a week. Most children have trouble fitting in this responsibility at first, and



nearly all have trouble remembering to bring their homework back to school until they have lots of practice doing so. Clear routines can help prevent the child and the whole family from those disastrous, hectic morning departures after a frantic search for homework — and shoes! Some families have rules about organizing the homework each afternoon. For example, one family posted these three rules:

1. Put backpacks upstairs in own room by 4 o'clock.
2. Unpack backpack and have homework assignment set to explain at supper.
3. Homework must be finished and re-packed in backpack by bedtime — so there are no surprises.

Parents need to establish a place for doing homework (the child's desk or the kitchen table) and a specific time (right after

snacks and before or after playtime with friends). It often takes several months or longer before a child can begin to do his homework on his own.

Experienced parents have discovered that if they find out early in the fall what the homework expectations are for each child in each grade, they can be more effective in helping children take responsibility for doing their own homework. It's easier for everyone to set up clear routines in September than in November. With some seven- and eight-year-olds, parents may need to stay close by the studying child, especially in the beginning. The temptations to get distracted and only "sort of" finish homework are too great for some younger children to resist.

Parents can assist by asking children questions about their homework or reading assignments, helping them drill for quizzes and tests, and checking drafts of written work and encouraging revision when necessary. With children who are eleven or twelve, schools often require larger projects which take several weeks to complete. Books may need to be located and borrowed, materials must be gathered, and drafts should be written and revised. To do this, a clear time frame must be established, and parents can help in this process.

Through their interest and concern, parents make clear that they believe homework matters and that they value careful and accurate work. They can help children feel that signing their names to the homework is saying, "I did the best I can."

Ideas for Supporting a Family's Routines

Each family has different ways of establishing and carrying out its routines and, obviously, not every technique for supporting routines will work in all families. But here follows a wide-ranging list of ideas that have worked in various families:

- Hang a large, clearly-printed calendar in a prominent place — maybe on the refrigerator. Spaces for days should be big enough so that numerous entries can be made for each day. (See page 248 for more calendar ideas.)
- Set up weekly calendars for each child, either on the master calendar or on separate calendars or cards.
- Have reliable clocks in several rooms of the house. Give children their own watches.
- Talk over the forthcoming day's plans with each child, either at bedtime or in the morning before goodbyes.
- Have children repeat back the plans for the day. "Who is meeting you today?" "Which bus are you taking today?" "Where are you going to meet me at 5:30 P.M.?" These questions may assist parents, also.
- Leave written reminders about the daily activities: "Call me as soon as you get home."
- Notes can be left on the kitchen table, blackboard, clipboard, front stairway, front hall table, or refrigerator. Develop a habit of leaving notes in the same place so that they will not be missed. (Reminder: even in safe areas, notes should not be left outside on the front door.)
- Establish regular sharing times for the family. Most families try to have dinners together at least several nights a week.
- Arrange back-up systems for when the regular routine breaks down. Remember, it *will* break down!

- Discuss with children the ways the routine might break down when parents aren't around, and think through solutions together.
- Ask yourself and your children, "What routines do we already have?" The answers make it easy to ascertain: What do we do? What might we want to add, change, or try to eliminate?
- Have the afternoon routine permit some choice for children. For example, if they go outdoors, they may be permitted to go to the house and yard of any one of three or four neighbors. This way, the children have a choice, but the parent is able to locate them.
- Decide if it would help the routine for children to have electronic beepers, for staying in touch with home or the parents' workplace. Be certain to investigate if and how the beeper can reach you and your child at the desired places. (Li'l Bugger, by Metromedia Telecommunications, is a family pager that helps a family stay in touch.)
- Consider fairness in sharing after-school responsibilities for child care. In some families, parents work at home, and in others, parents work outside of the home. Great tact and a sense of equity is needed for parents in these two kinds of households to share their routines. Children should play in a house where an adult is present, and absent parents must not rely too much on parents who work at home. In most households, it is an established rule that there must be an adult present for children to play with friends. To avoid taking advantage of certain families, consider hiring another adult to help you supervise children.
- Recognize that the routine will include times when children are alone and cannot think of anything to do. It is useful if parents and children generate a list of activities for a child to do while alone and to be certain materials, equipment, and supplies are available. From time to time, the list might include writing letters, making puzzles, figuring out the newest computer game, reading or writing a spy story, making their own stationery, cooking up an original recipe, mastering magic tricks or juggling, or writing a song.



- Provide children with a list of phone numbers. It should include the numbers of people who might be called in an emergency. Parents and children have to secure the following information and have it available near the telephone:

Phone Numbers to Call

Father at Work	_____
Mother at Work	_____
Neighbor or Near-by Person	_____
Grandparent / Special Relative	_____
Friend	_____
Operator	_____
Emergency Number	_____
Police Department	_____
Fire Department	_____
Family Doctor	_____
Ambulance	_____
Poison Control Center	_____
Number for Special Help —	
like Dial-a-Friend,	
Kids' Line, Chatters or	
Phone Friend	_____

Doing Chores

Doing chores probably ranks first or second on every child's list of most hated things in the world, and they are also probably the cause of more grumbling and family arguments than anything else. Still, almost every family finds that *everyone* needs to pitch in in order to keep the household functioning. In single parent families, or families where both parents work, it is generally *imperative* that children take on added responsibilities not only in caring for themselves, but in helping with household chores or caring for younger siblings.

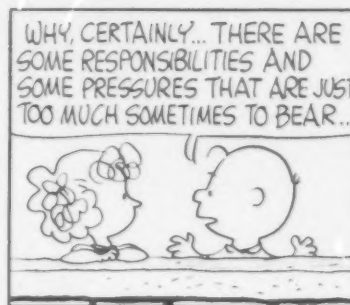
Even where the family situation does not require a lot of help from the children, wise parents will see to it that their children are assigned appropriate tasks, and that they are given greater and greater responsibility for caring for their own personal hygiene, and their own possessions. Not only will they be developing life-long habits, they will benefit in other ways too, as they begin to:

- Develop a sense of self-esteem because of their own perseverance.
- Contribute to the family by being aware of the family's needs and by performing chores.
- Appreciate the specialness of their home by experiencing the ways the family manages the household.
- Develop a sense of pride by taking responsibility for grooming themselves.
- Understand that their own contributions mean a lot to their family.

A major long-term study by psychiatrist George Vaillant and social worker Caroline Vaillant at Harvard University demonstrated that the capacity to work in childhood surpasses all other childhood variables in predicting adult mental health and success in interpersonal relationships. The sample in this study only included men, and the study began to follow children only at the age

of fourteen.¹ However, parents know that for boys and girls, work habits do not magically appear when a child turns fourteen. These habits begin to be formed much earlier, at four, five, and six years old, and they are gradually developed throughout middle childhood.

Families have a variety of ways to encourage children to do household chores and to assume responsibility for personal grooming. On the following pages are some ideas for involving children in chores, and then some specific family situations, including the chart the family used and the ways responsibility and independence were encouraged. Each family is encouraged to come up with its own chart and schemes as they think about their children.



Peanuts (© 1981 United Feature Syndicate, Inc.)

Ideas for Organizing Children's Chores

- Identify chores to be completed. The family should make a list of all chores that need to be done, either on a daily or a weekly basis. Each member of the family should recognize what chores are on the list.
- Select appropriate chores to assign each child. Age and physical prowess of the child and the lifestyle of the family are important considerations.
- Devise a creative and consistent reminder system. When children are provided with a system with simple reminders and a way to view progress, they may respond to the opportunity to contribute to the household.
- Assume responsibility to oversee task completion. While adults may be able to complete tasks faster, remember the benefits of involving children in household chores. Children can do parts of jobs that adults can do entirely. Even if a child can do only part of the chore, or if some of the child's work needs to be redone by the parent, the parent is still assisted as the child develops a sense of accomplishment.
- Consider rewards. Children especially enjoy being commended. Parents tend to forget that a child who has just fed the cat or stacked newspapers for recycling needs to be thanked. For some children, continual and consistent parental praise suffices. For others, monetary rewards, including a weekly allowance, extra money or fees for services, or treats, such as ice cream or a trip, may be more enticing. Parents can devise a coupon book, "Dana's Special Rewards," and it can include a free movie, a new game, or a party as the rewards for work well done.
- Discuss punishments. The system for disapproving of poor and sloppy jobs should be consistent and predictable. The child should be informed of the consequences that follow a job not done on time or not at all. As parents, ask yourself, if a child puts off the



responsibility until minutes before baseball practice, will practice be forfeited? If a child goes to bed without completing chores, will you make the child get out of bed to complete the task?

Designing and using charts has many advantages. Charts and reminder systems help create order and a feeling of fairness among children, and help children identify their duties. Children will gain a clear perception of what they have accomplished when they can document their performance. When the duties are predictable, fair, and predetermined, children will not feel like victims of other family members' demands. They won't feel their tasks have been assigned to fit the immediate needs of the parents. Charts and systems help children feel as though they're part of the process; they help children see the value of the duties. There is more of a sense of control rather than the feeling, "I don't know what to do unless my parents tell me."

A word of caution: don't view children as "free labor"! Often when parents see a child watching TV, relaxing in a rocking chair, or even reading a book, parents perceive them as doing nothing. It is easy to choose these very moments to suggest that a child help collect the laundry, put the dishes in the dishwasher, or pick up the front hallway. Furthermore, parents may expect the chores to be done within an unrealistic time frame. These incidents interrupt children's private moments. Obviously, a child's response to such demands is one of annoyance, deep pain, or sudden lethargy. When a child is asked to do a chore on demand, it is very likely that the response will be, "Not now," or, "In a little while — I promise." These interactions make household chores even more unpleasant.

In addition to setting up family charts and schedules, parents may discover that their involvement is necessary for children to follow through. Dr. Benjamin Spock makes the following comment:

Another aspect of chores for young children that seems important to me is that parents continue — for months and years — to do these jobs along with their children. Very often when parents find that their children can perform a task satis-

factorily, they promptly delegate it to the children while they themselves turn to something else. That may be sound when the children get older and perhaps even ask to take over a task completely, but not when the children are very young.

On the other hand, children under 12, 14, or 16 don't usually have enough persistence or sufficient joy in completing a task. So they tend to procrastinate after a while, or fool around or quarrel over which one is not doing her or his share. Then the parents have to nag. But if the parents continue to participate in jobs, the children will continue to be inspired by their example — and by their companionship. It will still be a grown-up's job that they're allowed to share in rather than a child's unpleasant chore.²

It appears that children of two working parents are required to do things for themselves more than children whose mothers are not employed outside the home. School-aged children with working mothers are also more likely to have regular household responsibilities.³ In fact, they are often needed to take on these duties at home to enable their mothers to work. It may be that mothers who are not employed outside the home could ease their household pressures by learning from the experience of women who have entered the workforce outside the home and expect more cooperation from children.

Sometimes, parents may think, "Why bother? It's easier to do it myself." Nonetheless, it is in the children's interest to learn responsibility for caring for themselves and for others. While it may appear easier to give in to children's protests and do the chores yourself, it is better to work to find a compromise solution, one that neither pushes chores on children nor allows them to neglect responsibilities works well.

Families dream up (and consistently revise) all different kinds of ways of assigning chores and keeping the household functioning. As families become more experienced in running these systems, a spirit of fun and good humor often replaces the earnestness of the first drafts of lists and rules. That spirit comes through in some of the vignettes that follow. Different kinds of systems seem to make sense for different families.



JANE SCHERR

Fostering Independence, or The Other 3 Rs 157

The Simons

Background: The Simons were a reconstituted family. Mrs. Simon shared joint custody of her two children with her previous husband, and Mr. Simon had joint custody of his two children. His children stayed with the couple Monday through Thursday, and her children lived there Wednesday through Saturday. Mrs. Simon, who described herself as a structuralist, left little to chance. "Our lives are so crazy," she explained. "We try to set up routines so that we don't have to worry about all the little details. When the children walk in the door, I want to ask them what happened in school, not tell them to hang up their coats."

Design: Mrs. Simon developed a simple reminder system comprised of a list of responsibilities for all the children.



BEFORE SCHOOL:
✓make your bed

AFTER SCHOOL:
✓hang up jacket in mudroom
✓put mittens and hat in box
✓put boots on boot rack
✓clean out lunch box and put on counter
✓put away clean clothes on your bed
✓find shoes and have ready for morning

BEFORE BEDTIME:
baths: Tuesday and Thursday for Jason and Peter
Wednesday and Friday for Mary and Jessica

Outcome: This system helped all members feel secure and organized. Each child was able to contribute to caring for himself or herself, and what could have been a chaotic household evolved into a fairly stable, cooperative venture.

Background: Dinner is an activity that requires many phases of preparation and clean-up every day. One family with three children found a way to streamline the activities of preparing dinner and cleaning up afterwards.

Dinner Time

Design: The Montagues established three groups of dinner-time assignments which rotated on a weekly basis. Each set of assignments had one before-dinner job and two after-dinner ones.

Montague's Chart

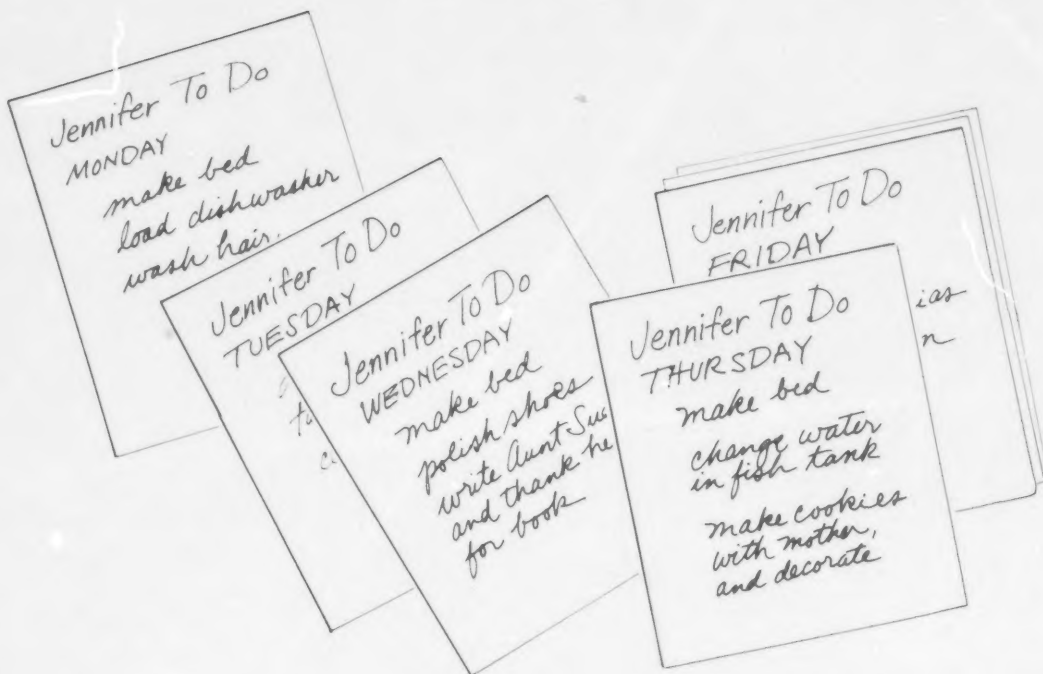
Person #1	Person #2	Person #3
set table for dinner	make salad + vegetable dish	put out Condiments + beverages
clear dishes	wash + dry dishes and pans	put away foods.
set table for breakfast	clean counter-top + stove	sweep floor

Outcome: The children sensed the specialness of their family because their parents required that each member be present before dinner to carry out their responsibilities, and to stay around after dinner to complete duties as a family. The dinner period became an opportunity for the children to learn to contribute to the household as they talked with one another.

Jennifer

Background: Jennifer was an only child; a chart with fixed duties for each day didn't seem to be the best way to give her household responsibility.

Design: Jennifer's mother had the time to see that Jennifer completed a variety of tasks. She bought Jennifer a pad for writing down her responsibilities. Each morning at breakfast, Jennifer and her mother compiled a daily schedule with a list of tasks. At the end of the day, Jennifer and her mother checked to see that all the items on the list had been completed.



Outcome: Together, Jennifer and her mother identified the tasks that helped Jennifer develop discipline, self-confidence, and respect for herself and others.

Background: Eleven-year-old Christian had a job outside the home and was involved with a number of sports activities. His parents both worked. They wanted a method that would help Christian develop a sense of control over his day-to-day obligations and also help him learn how to manage time.

Christian

Design: Christian and his parents developed a list of his chores and responsibilities. Each week Christian and his parents rated each task as a high- or low-priority item, and then they decided how to fit the assignment into daily time slots on the weekly calendar.

CHRISTIAN

	MORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING
Sunday	deliver papers		
Monday		clean desk	sort magazines
Tuesday	make my lunch		take out trash
Wednesday			help fix supper
Thursday			
Friday			pick up and clean my room
Saturday	go food shopping - help with bags		

Outcome: Christian enjoyed this systematic method because he was able to schedule other activities around it. The method was flexible enough to meet both his and his parents' schedules.

Carly

Background: Carly's father recognized that his eight-year-old daughter enjoyed responsibility, yet she wanted step-by-step guidance for each task that was assigned to her.

Design: Her father used a weekly chart that listed main chores and their components. For example, the laundry assignment had multiple steps to check off. Daily items included making the bed and picking up clothes. Weekly duties were stacking games and toys, gathering dirty laundry, and organizing the dresser.

Outcome: When her father broke down multiple-step assignments into several more manageable tasks, Carly easily learned how to do them. She developed good habits and was proud of her work performance.

<i>Dad's Official Laundry Breakdown for Carly</i>		MAY 1	MAY 8	MAY 15	MAY 22
1. Bring laundry baskets to laundry room.		✓	✓		
2. Sort clothes into heavy and permanent press.		✓	✓		
3. Dump one load of clothes into machine.		✓	✓		
4. Put one cup of detergent in, then start machine.		✓	✓		
5. Shake out each item before putting into dryer.		✓	✓		
6. Hang each person's wash and wear items in groups on post.		✓	✓		
7. Put items to be ironed in the large red basket.		✓	✓		
8. Fold remaining items and place in the appropriate baskets.		✓	✓		

Background: The LaFosse family enjoyed an element of surprise in chore assignments. They had two "job jars"; one was for daily jobs, the other for weekly.

The LaFosse System

Design: Each Saturday morning, the three LaFosse children and their parents dug into the "daily job jar" and the "weekly job jar." The daily job papers had assignments such as "make all the beds" and "pick up the family room." The weekly assignments ranged from "clean the bathroom" to "make the dessert Friday night" to "shampoo the dog on Saturday." The family posted the assignments on the bulletin board which acted as a reminder system. As the weekly assignments were completed, the papers were moved to the bottom.



Outcome: This system was ideal for the LaFosse's style of living because both parents worked and no one had to nag anyone to make sure items were completed. The bulletin board was visible, and it reminded each member to get jobs done. The children enjoyed the variety the system offered.

PUT ON A STICKER WHEN COMPLETED.

	Mary	Nancy	Cathy	Mom	Dad
DAILY JOBS					
WEEKLY JOBS					

Fords' Job Wheel

Background: The Fords needed to get a variety of chores done at different times throughout the week. The parents did not want to listen to the two children say that they were bored performing the same duties each week, so they found a way to rotate the household routines.

Design: The Fords devised a "dial-a-job" circular chore chart with the two children's names dividing the inner circle and appropriate chores written on the border of the larger outer circle. The dial was set up to ensure that each girl was assigned a combination of daily and once-a-week chores. The chores on the chart had been agreed upon by the family members after the needs of the household were discussed.

Outcome: Since everyone agreed that the assignments were fair and realistic, the children were willing to carry out their duties.



Family Notes



Background: Mrs. Edwards, who managed a household that had frequent visitors, decided that formal charts just would not work for her family.

Design: She came up with an interesting alternative scheme. Mrs. Edwards wrote amusing messages and placed them in strategic positions every few weeks. Some of her notes which served to keep the household running smoothly included, "Did the towels drop? Squat and pick them up!" and "Don't waste, cover the toothpaste."

Outcome: Guests and family members looked forward to finding the notes and gladly complied with her requests.

Duties for John and Mark

Background: John and his brother Mark each have separate responsibilities.

Design: Their parents made two charts listing specific duties and made multiple copies on graph paper. The boys placed stars on their weekly charts next to completed tasks. They traded charts every week.

Outcome: The boys enjoyed seeing their weekly accomplishments, and the process helped them develop a sense of self-esteem. Their parents used various forms of rewards for jobs well done; sometimes it was a family trip, other times it was ice cream, additional spending money, or a special movie.



Week of:	May 17 John	May 24 Mark	May 31 John	June 7 Mark	June 14 John	June 21 Mark
do dinner dishes	☆					
walk the dog	☆					
vacuum mom & dad's room	☆					
buy Sunday paper	☆					

Week of:	May 17 Mark	May 24 John	May 31 Mark	June 7 John	June 14 Mark	June 21 John
clean birdcage	☆					
vacuum den	☆					
organize playroom	☆					
buy milk & O.J. on Wed.	☆					

A Family of Eight

Background: Mrs. Wing, a working mother with six children, realized that organizing the chores for a large family takes ingenuity, especially when the children range in age and physical abilities.

Design: The Wings devised a plan which assigned duties to each child for a duration of four months. Duties were adapted to seasonal demands and were changed as children became able to handle additional responsibilities. The Wings' system required older siblings to assist the younger ones with complex chores.

The younger children were assigned simpler tasks to complete on their own. For example, eighteen-year-old Karen was responsible for driving her six- and nine-year-old sisters to school and for helping them pack their lunches. Six-year-old Joan was assigned to set the dinner table and rinse the dinner dishes. The four other children were assigned duties appropriate to their age and physical abilities. Upon completion of the chores each week, the child colored in the appropriate block on the chart.

Outcome: The children sometimes said that they were a closer-knit family because they were responsible for helping each other.



JANE SCHERR

	January	February	March	April
KAREN Make school lunches, drive Joan to school, fold laundry				
TALBOTT Mow lawn, put laundry away				
KATHY Feed cat, change girls' beds, load p.m. dishwasher				
STEVEN Feed dog, change boys' beds, load a.m. dishwasher				
LISA Unload p.m. dishes, vacuum room				
JOAN Set table, rinse dinner dishes, vacuum room				



Numbered Car Seats and Jobs

Background: One inventive mother, tired of listening to her children bicker about which seat in the car they would ride in, wove this dilemma into the weekly chore plan.

Design: The four Melody children's chore assignments changed weekly, as did their seating arrangements in the family car. Their chart had chores broken down into four divisions. Each of the four children would be responsible for one block each week. The number assigned to each block of assignments corresponded to a seat in the car.

SEAT 1 Duties: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	SEAT 2 Duties: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
SEAT 3 Duties: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	SEAT 4 Duties: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Outcome: Mrs. Melody noted that not only did the household run in a smoother fashion, but also there were fewer arguments when the family traveled.

Written charts and schedules may not seem congenial to some families, and to some they may seem too rigid, too confining, or too hard to set up. The children's ages or daily schedules or particular needs may make written charts inappropriate or impossible to construct. In such cases, other systems may need to be devised.

A twelve-year-old who did not like "following orders" from a list of chores was very willing to pitch in and help both his parents three or four times a week for half an hour. One parent or the other would warn him, "This afternoon, I'm going to need help around 4:30." Around this time, his mother or father would call, "Ben, come on, it's time to help." He would come and receive their request to perform numerous chores. For example, he would get dirty clothes upstairs, bring them down to the laundry room, and assume responsibility for doing the laundry and getting it back up to the bedroom drawers. Sometimes he would water all the plants, or vacuum several rooms, or just run errands around the house.

The parents of a seven-year-old discovered that she would persist in helping if she knew the exact amount of time that would be involved. Therefore, they got a minute timer and would set it for ten minutes. During that time, she worked for the family. Her mother would direct her through a series of small tasks, such as sweeping the pantry, putting away toys in the living room, or using a spray bottle to clean the sink.

Any of these systems have the underlying purpose of instructing children that they are able to take responsibility for themselves and for others, and that their efforts contribute to general welfare. Also, these systems make clear that children's work is needed, that it counts, and that children are expected to make a contribution to their world. The kinds of work that children can do changes in scope and complexity as they mature, but the long-term effect of expecting children to take responsibility is that they develop an ethic of work and a sense of when their own performance has been acceptable. Of course, doing chores is only one aspect of life, but it is one that teaches skills, keeps parents from feeling harried, and assists children in developing a sense of responsibility.

Encouraging Reading

The independence that reading affords to children is exhilarating to them. No longer forced to wait until a parent is free to read aloud, now children can choose their own magazine or picture book, comic strip or joke book, and can entertain themselves in silent concentration and amusement. The father of a nine-year-old proudly discussed his daughter's latest activity. "It is fantastic to see how much Gabrielle loves to read and how it keeps her absorbed for hours."

Almost immediately after children begin reading to themselves, parents notice that they have taken leaps ahead in independence. Rose, the mother of a girl who started to read rather early, said that as soon as her daughter could read, the pressure lifted in the household. She commented, "Not long ago we purchased a toy that required assembly, and when Gwen asked me to help her put it together, I was busy. I assured her that I would help shortly. When I went to help her, I found that Gwen had read the directions and had already put it together herself. She was already playing with it!"

Being able to read opens the whole world of books to children, but that isn't all. All of a sudden, notes from Mom or Dad make sense, and so do signs on buildings and streets, and charts and diagrams. A whole new world of words opens up, a world that requires the ability to read. Suddenly, other tools such as the telephone, typewriter, or computer, make sense.

Children's desire to learn to read and to keep on reading is fostered by parents' examples. When children see parents reading newspapers, magazines, and books, looking absorbed and concentrated, talking about what they have read, or reading it aloud to other people, they have the most potent of all possible encouragements to read themselves.

Aside from seeing that their children have access to all sorts of reading material, the best thing that parents can do to help children learn to read and to love books is to *read aloud* to them. There is



hardly a child who would not respond to that closeness. Even ten- and twelve-year-olds enjoy it. Younger children learn the conventions of reading: how to hold a book, how to turn pages and how to move sequentially through a book. Older children learn new words and expressions. Children still need to be read to in middle childhood after they can read to themselves. Hearing a parent read stories, the comfort of the quiet times together, the excitement of hearing the story unfold, reach a climax, and draw to a conclusion, and the rhythm of complications presented and sorted out, are powerful incentives to learn to read and to read better.

Parents sometimes question the value of the types of material children select on their own. Children love magazines — especially ones with lots of color photographs — comic books of many different kinds, catalogues, and newspaper cartoons. They also enjoy looking at picture books of nature, animals, cars, and trucks. They love intricately detailed drawings and crowded pages. As they learn to read and decode these complicated visual messages, they are building the skills that help them read symbols and words. Parents are often not keen on their children's first (or later) choices of reading matter, but children's interest in reading is so precious that these choices must be respected. From them, children go on to develop taste.

Wide — even indiscriminate — reading is not uncommon among children between seven and ten, and during these years children's tastes change many times. For a few months, a child may only be interested in books of facts about the stars. Then suddenly, motorcycles may become a burning interest, followed by a yearning for books about mountain climbing. For a while, cartoons may be all that a child likes to look at, and then for a while photography may be more interesting. Parents should take their lead from children, provide what children like, and not despair at their quirky choices. Flexibility encourages children to become avid readers.

Here follow ideas for encouraging children's reading in order to foster self-esteem. The list includes ideas for home reading, ideas for selecting readings, ideas for using the library and bookstores, and ideas for expanding the child's reading world.

Ideas for Home Reading

- Remember that children begin to read at different ages, so parents need not worry if a six-year-old is not yet decoding words. However, keep reading aloud to children before they learn to read and after. Usually, if a child is not reading at the end of the second grade, it is time for the family to come up with a plan of action.

- Make reading matter of all kinds — magazines, catalogues, books, atlases, photograph books, cartoon books, and story books — available to children in several rooms of the house.
- Have reading matter organized enough so children can find what they are looking for. Books can be classified by subject and size, magazines can be stored together, and reference books like dictionaries, encyclopedias, and atlases can be kept together on an accessible shelf.
- Decide with children on one or two magazines to subscribe to. Children love magazines, and they read them over and over. *World Magazine* issues from 1975 are still as interesting as the most recent ones. Plan to keep and store all issues in a place where children can easily take them out and put them away.

*Why Do Children Reread the Same Books
and Magazines Over and Over?*

Perhaps as they grow in understanding, they keep seeing and comprehending new things in familiar material. They are also always adding to their store of acquired knowledge. One child said, "I read it again because I want to memorize it."

- Read the material your children are reading and talk about it with them.
- Try offering *Asterix* and *Tintin* books to children who are not greatly interested in reading. Many parents report that these densely illustrated books work like magic for children who are having difficulty getting started in reading.

Phil, a twenty-year-old, recalled that the happiest mornings of his childhood were the ones after his

parents had held a big cocktail party. He would get a large bowl and wander through the house, collecting all the left-over mixed nuts. Then he would go back to bed with a pile of *Tintins* and the nuts, reading and eating under the covers.

- Try offering Richard Scarry's picture books to pre-readers. Some children spend hours studying every detail of these packed pages.
- Use bedtime as reading time. Although bedtime can be a designated hour, parents can allow for an hour of reading before lights out. Provide a convenient reading light for bedtime reading.
- Try to set aside a short period of time for parents and children to read aloud. *The Read-Aloud Handbook* by Jim Trelease provides a guide to the world of reading aloud.
- Post a sheet on your child's bulletin board where each book the child reads can be listed.
- Send reading "care packages" to children when they are at camp or when you are away from home on trips. Include joke books just for fun.

Books I Read in November

Name of Book

Author

Date

- Consider keeping a scrapbook for each child in which children dictate stories about their reading or about real experiences. Such scrapbooks serve several purposes. Like photograph albums, they record specific moments in children's lives. Also, children love to read about their younger selves, and when they dictate stories, they don't get bogged down by the mechanics of writing. Children also enjoy remembering books they used to love.

- Remember that shared reading can be a rich source of family jokes and laughter. A nine-year-old whose reading includes the Danziger cartoon books *Out in the Sticks* is always saying things like, "Hiram doesn't just like *solar* power, he likes *lunar*, *windar*, and *watar* power."

Ideas for Selecting Reading

- Choose reading material that connects closely with the child's current interests. Children will spend hours with books that really answer their burning curiosity about dinosaurs, mythology, magic, airplanes, or artillery. Strike while the interest is hot! You can't always wait for birthdays or special events to buy the book they really want.

- Think about where the current interests are likely to move; if you cannot begin to guess, ask another parent or librarian. Choose reading materials that could open and support related interests.

- Resist discouragement if children don't have interests similar to yours and those you are most excited by.

- Determine your child's reading level by having the child read a page out loud. If there are 8 to 10 words per page that the child doesn't know, the book is probably just beyond the child's reading level. Such a book may be an appropriate one to read aloud to the child. Although it is important to choose plenty of books at the child's reading level, there is also value in providing material that is a little too hard. Reading difficult material stretches the child's

vocabulary and comprehension, but don't let the child become too frustrated.

- Get other children to recommend to your child books that they loved. Children's librarians often make and keep lists of books recommended by children of various ages.
- Use suggested reading lists sent home periodically by the school.

For an extensive list of books for children, see Appendix D. The list includes books in the following categories: Activities for Children and Parents; Almanacs; Animal Stories; Anthologies of Poetry; Anthologies of Stories; Biographies and Autobiographies; Classics; Cookbooks; Dictionaries; Fairy Tales and Folk Tales; First Readers; Free or Inexpensive Items; Hobbies; Humor and Fantasy; Music; Mysteries; Nature and Science; Personal Growth and Self-Help; Sports; Travel.

- Be aware that out of the vast number of children's books published each year, specialists in children's literature identify the most outstanding. For example, the American Library Association Children's Service Division awards annually the Newberry Medal to the author of the most distinguished contribution to literature for children and the Caldecott Medal to the illustrator of the most distinguished picture book. Books that have received these awards display a "gold medal" on the cover. Other resources to assist parents in selecting appropriate literature are included in Appendix B.
- Read reviews of children's literature in publications like the *New York Times Book Review*.

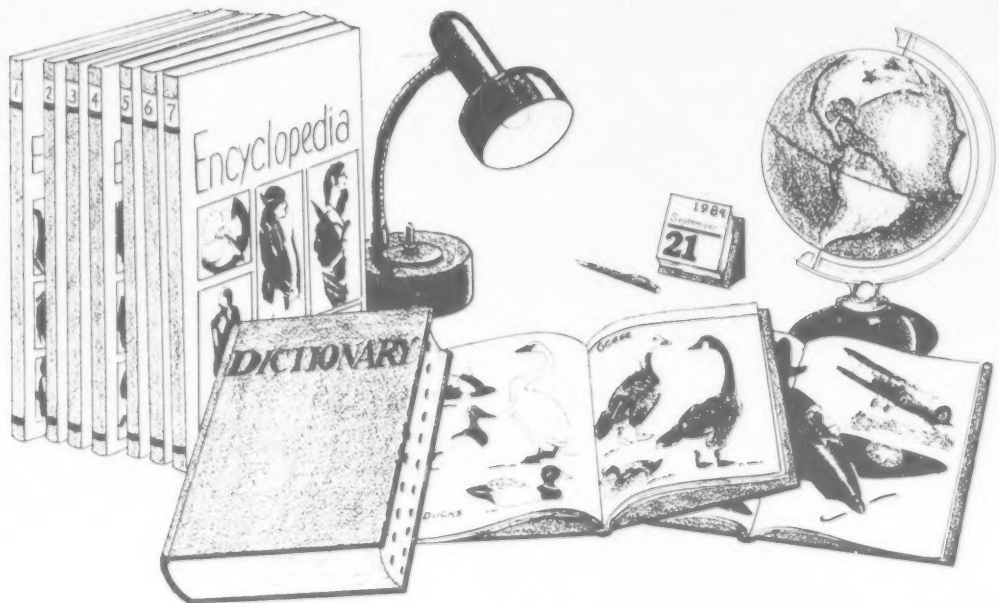


Ideas for Using the Library and Bookstores

- Get a library card for yourself and your children.
- Allow ample time for children to browse and to select those books they want to sign out.
- Help your child learn how to use the library's card catalogue. The subject index will be of most use.
- Find out about all the programs that the library offers to children. Libraries may offer film series, reading clubs, special read-a-thons, and international reading series. Investigate every option.
- Inquire about when, where, and for how long children can visit the library without an accompanying adult.
- Teach children how to make use of bookstores. Help them to understand how the bookstore is organized and where they might find books on particular subjects. Some bookstores are hospitable to children, but others do not encourage younger browsers. Find out. In larger cities there are often discount bookstores. Such bookstores are a wonderful source of presents for other children's birthday parties. Stop in every week or so, or develop a system with a friend.
- Locate a bookswap. In many areas, bookswaps are booming. Children can bring in out-grown books, turn them in for "credit," and then browse and choose books to take home in exchange. Often friends, relatives, or neighbors have unwanted books, and they may be willing to donate them to a child to use as additional "credit" at a bookswap. Likewise, school fairs, flea markets, yard sales, and bookstore remainder tables are all good sources for inexpensive additions to children's home libraries.
- Keep "wish lists" of the more expensive books children want and provide grandparents or other relatives with suggestions for presents on special occasions. Have children keep these book wish lists up-to-date.

*Ideas for
Expanding the Child's Reading World*

- Consider as you read your own newspapers, magazines, and books whether a certain article or paragraph might be of interest to your child. Share interesting information your child would like to know, such as news about the pandas in the Washington Zoo, or a freak tornado which touched down in Newton, Massachusetts, or the fisherman who caught a giant shark, or the emergency landing of a Concorde aircraft in New York.
- Respond to your child's requests by asking the child to read information to you. When the child asks, "Can we make pretzels?" say in return, "Read the recipe and see if we have all the ingredients and the time for them to bake before we have to go." If



the child asks, "Can we go apple picking?" ask the child to look up the newspaper listing of orchards and then see which is closest on the map.

- Respond to your child's questions for factual information by looking up answers together in an almanac or encyclopedia.
- Help your child learn how to use the index at the end of books.
- Use family trips and excursions as a way of expanding children's reading. Read maps and travel brochures together when planning trips.
- Provide board games, word games, and playing cards for children. Games are a natural way to encourage reading.
- Be aware that children who play role-playing games are reading much of the time. One family noted that because of playing such games, their children were better able to read maps, charts, and graphs, to plan strategies, and to apply information gained through reading. Even younger siblings and children who are observers of these games expand their vocabularies and interest in reading when they watch these games being played.
- Build on friendships made in camp or while on vacation by encouraging children to exchange letters, clippings and photographs.
- Seize upon children's television program interests to expand their reading. If a child loves "CHiPs," provide books on the police, detective work, or motorcycles. If a child watches "Little House on the Prairie," "Nancy Drew," "The Hardy Boys," or "Alfred Hitchcock," introduce the child to the relevant books. Movies such as *The Wizard of Oz* or *Black Stallion* are good introductions to these books.

There is no question that reading allows children to develop a true sense of independence. As they spend hours reading all kinds of materials, they are engaged in their own independent exploration of the world.

Guiding Television Viewing

In 1983, American television viewing time reached an all-time high, with average daily viewing per household breaking the seven-hour mark. Statistics show that by the age of 18, many people will have spent an average of 15,000 hours in front of the television against 11,000 in the classroom.⁴

**The daily average television viewing time
per US household since 1950**

1950	4 hours, 35 minutes	1967	5 hours, 42 minutes
1951	4 hours, 43 minutes	1968	5 hours, 46 minutes
1952	4 hours, 49 minutes	1969	5 hours, 50 minutes
1953	4 hours, 40 minutes	1970	5 hours, 56 minutes
1954	4 hours, 46 minutes	1971	6 hours, 2 minutes
1955	4 hours, 51 minutes	1972	6 hours, 12 minutes
1956	5 hours, 1 minute	1973	6 hours, 15 minutes
1957	5 hours, 9 minutes	1974	6 hours, 14 minutes
1958	5 hours, 5 minutes	1975	6 hours, 7 minutes
1959	5 hours, 2 minutes	1976	6 hours, 18 minutes
1960	5 hours, 6 minutes	1977	6 hours, 10 minutes
1961	5 hours, 7 minutes	1978	6 hours, 17 minutes
1962	5 hours, 6 minutes	1979	6 hours, 28 minutes
1963	5 hours, 11 minutes	1980	6 hours, 36 minutes
1964	5 hours, 25 minutes	1981	6 hours, 45 minutes
1965	5 hours, 29 minutes	1982	6 hours, 48 minutes
1966	5 hours, 32 minutes	1983	7 hours, 2 minutes

(From Associated Press)

Television is a powerful medium: it lures, distracts and mesmerizes. It attracts children away from other perhaps more meaningful activities. Television makes children passive and unresourceful because they become dependent on TV for entertainment.

It appears that both adults and children are spending a large proportion of their waking hours in the presence of a turned-on television set. Overexposure to television is common for children who are between the ages of six and twelve. In addition to

watching too many hours of television, children may watch shows that are fearful or full of violence. When unsupervised, children watch TV while doing homework or while reading. In some homes, the TV is left on as background company all the time, becoming part of all activities. Some children even have a TV on while they practice an instrument, simply turning down the volume so it can't be heard.

Children between the ages of eight and ten who watch as much as four or five hours a day of television often show signs of learning problems, restless behavior, and reading deficits. Also, such children frequently show heightened fears about dangers, violence, and their own personal safety in the world. When heavy viewers are gradually weaned from constant watching, these problems begin to diminish.

Families need to think about the amount of television viewing that is going on in their homes. In some families, in some schools, and sometimes in whole communities, people have experimented with turning off the television completely for a week or more or severely limiting viewing time. The results have been dramatic. Instead of watching TV, families read aloud together and played board games or music together, and many of them now realize that the television had been a powerful filler of time.

Parents must try to set the limits. Experienced parents know that they must exert control over the TV, limiting the amount of time children watch, and monitoring specific programs. Together, parents and children can reach an agreement on how much television viewing will be allowed. After the family reaches a decision about the amount of time children may watch television each day and each week, they can decide which programs will be included. For children who are unable to comprehend time restrictions, parents may place a limit on the number of shows to be watched. If the number and choice of programs is decided well in advance, fewer conflicts will arise. The process of setting limits on television viewing should be a constant and continuing one for most families.

Critical Viewing

Limits alone are not enough. Parents also need to assist children in becoming critical television viewers. A first step is to help children understand the differences between real life and television. Often children do not understand that what is seen on television is not necessarily something that is really happening. In some shows people are pretending to be other people, while other shows portray real events. Parents can discuss with children the differences between watching events on television and being there in person. Six- to nine-year-olds especially need assistance in differentiating between televised illusion and reality.

It is important to discuss what is seen on television. For example, while watching a chosen program, parents can compare the TV characters to people a child knows. Do adults really crawl on the floor of large department stores looking for furniture price tags? Why do they use that music in the scary parts? Children could be asked how they would change some parts of the show to make it more believable. Parents can discuss stereotypes of sex, race, age, and ability by presenting examples from experience. Not all mothers stay at home and clean house all day, and not all old people walk with canes.

Parents can also discuss with children the fact that television is a medium where all decisions have already been made. Television shows you that a character is short or tall, and you observe obvious behavior. It is natural to compare watching television to reading a book. In a book, you read a description but must create your own vision of a situation. Books allow all readers to develop their own judgments about what a character is like. In television, a representation of a scene or a character has already been decided, thereby eliminating some of the imaginative process.

Children also need help in understanding the meaning of commercials. They can be helped to see that in most commercials, viewers are being influenced to buy something, and gradually children may become critical of messages that try to sell products

that are not good for them, such as certain foods and toys. By talking about both the overt and hidden messages of commercials, children can learn to be critical, skeptical, and independent despite the "hard sell" that is directed at them.

There are other ways of helping children become critical viewers. Children can become acute analysts of what they see and hear on television when they understand how a television show is made, begin to distinguish different types of shows and learn some of the technical aspects of television. The work of Dorothy G. Singer and Jerome L. Singer at the Yale University Family Television Research and Consultation Center has demonstrated that children need to be given this kind of information.

The following briefly outlines information a parent may explain to children about television:

How a TV Show Is Made

It is worthwhile to explain that the writer creates a story, sometimes based in part on a real event. The writer describes characters for the story. Actors and actresses are hired to play parts in the story; in real life those persons may be totally different. For example, a man who pretends to be an angry, lying man on TV may actually be a very nice person. The director gives the actors and actresses specific instructions about how to act a part. The producer is responsible for making sure there is enough money to produce the show: for hiring actors, actresses, film crew, wardrobe personnel, and for overseeing the whole production.

Types of Shows

Parents can also help their children differentiate between the types of shows and the amount of credibility that can be assigned to each. Broad categories of shows are easily defined, but parents may want to discuss with their children some of the less obvious breakdowns, such as the difference between cartoons based on real life situations and ones that are pure fantasy. Another category of television shows which includes a wide spectrum is talk shows.

They range from the straight talk and discussion format to the variety presentations to strictly news.

One area that parents may wish to use as an example of "things not being as they seem" is the game show. The surface situation is contestants, competition, and rules. However, the real reason for many of these shows is to advertise all those "prizes." Seen from the perspective of a half-hour long advertisement, these shows take on a different meaning.

Technical Aspects of Television

Even young children can learn about special effects. For example, people don't really disappear; either the camera is shut off while the person walks out of the scene, or that piece of film is edited out of the final version. Once a child knows how a few of these "tricks" are executed, he or she will be able to spot other special effects. This knowledge will assist the child in making more critical judgments of what is seen on television. For further information, see Appendix E. Another excellent resource is Action for Children's Television (ACT), 46 Austin Street, Newtonville, MA 02160.

Ideas for Guiding Children's Television Watching

- Decide if children can watch television on school days and if so, for how long. What does this amount of viewing eliminate from their lives?
- Use the television guide with children to decide which shows to watch.
- Be clear about the time a child can watch television each day. Guard against a situation in which children feel that TV time can be saved up.
- Determine how much television can be watched on weekends. What does this amount of viewing cut out from children's lives?

How Much TV Do We Really Watch?

	MORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING	Total ↓
Mon.	7-8:30	3-5	7-10	6½
Tues.	7-8	4-5	7-10	5
Wed.		3-6	7-11	7
Thurs.			7-11	4
Fri.			6-11:30	5½
Sat.	8-11:30	12:30-3		6
Sun.		1-5	7-9:30	6½
Grand Total:				40½ hours

- Keep an accurate log for a week on exactly how many hours parents and children watch TV. Decide if you need to limit viewing time.
- Establish rules about finishing homework, practicing, reading, or doing chores before watching TV.
- Remind children that they have control over the television set. When a show is too unbelievable or scary, they can turn it off.

- Help children learn to turn the television off by themselves as soon as their program is over.
- Recognize that when a program is over, it is best not to just walk away from the television. It is important to find out your child's feelings and opinions about the show. Discuss the content of the show and be open to the child's conversation.
- Keep in mind that specials may arise that your child will want to see. Such an additional show may have to be worked into the weekly allotment of television time.
- Observe whether there are any times that children automatically turn on the TV. Is this OK?
- Monitor the TV shows your children watch. Keep the TV close to where parents spend time, not off in a distant bedroom. Keep track of what and how much children watch.
- Watch for children being captivated by habit-forming soap operas or serialized shows. There is little value in children keeping a daily appointment with such shows.
- Remember that many communities have access to cable television, giving families the chance to buy into alternative television channels. Cable TV offers a spectrum of choices; but remember, most movies on cable TV are uncensored and uncut.
- Create a list of acceptable programs for each child. Update it regularly.
- Be aware that when children are alone, they do get bored. Sometimes they turn on the TV because they're frightened. Parents need to offer constructive alternatives to turning on the "tube."
- Remember that just because a sensitive issue is broached on a TV show, it doesn't mean the show should be prohibited. Realistic depiction of issues regarding drugs, sex, and violence need not be censored. If the program has merit, it may open discussion.

- Consider whether children would watch less television if they had more activities from which to choose.
- Observe whether children watch television even when they have friends over. Offer them something to do instead.
- Ask yourself if television watching could be taking the place of activities that the family might do together. Think about the example being set by parents. If the TV is on during breakfast and dinner, this suggests that it is more important than conversation.
- Consider reading aloud to children for fifteen minutes each day. Some studies show that a small time spent each day reading aloud to children inspires them to turn off the TV. Also, some National Public Radio Stations have a read-aloud program which many children enjoy.

Chapter 4 Footnotes

1. George E. Vaillant and Caroline O. Vaillant, "Natural History of Male Psychological Health, X: Work as a Predictor of Positive Mental Health," *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, 138 (November, 1981), p. 11.
2. Benjamin Spock, "Teaching Your Child to be Responsible," *Redbook* (May, 1977), p. 49.
3. Lois Wladis Hoffman, "The Effects of Maternal Employment on the Academic Attitudes and Performance of School-Aged Children," *School Psychological Review*, 9 (1980), p. 324.
4. Cynthia Alperowicz, *Arts for Young Audiences: An ACT Handbook*. Newtonville, MA: Action for Children's Television, 1982, p. 3.
5. Dorothy G. Singer, Jerome L. Singer, and Diana M. Zuckerman, *Teaching Television*. New York: The Dial Press, 1981.



JANE SCHERR

190 School's Out - Now What?

Protecting Children's Safety

SAFETY IS OF PARAMOUNT CONCERN for all parents, no matter what age their children may be. As children go through the years of middle childhood, their interests naturally take them further away from home and out into the community as they walk to guitar lessons, go to the local variety store, or take a bus to visit a friend. Safety now takes on a new dimension, with added fears and concerns. Children this age need some measure of freedom, however, if they are to develop a sense of independence. For parents to grant them this freedom, they will want to see that their children are taught, and constantly reminded about, safety — safety in the home and out in their specific community.

In some communities, dangers are so real that safety is a major obstacle to a child's developing independence. In some cases,

parents are so fearful that they cannot allow the child to do things alone or go places alone. In such cases, there may be no solution to the problem short of hiring someone to be with the child, arranging work schedules around the child's after-school activities, or making special arrangements with other families. Whenever possible, though, parents should try to address the issue of safety, and find the balance between the child's need for freedom and the child's need to feel protected and secure.

This chapter will help families find many ways of protecting children's safety. Children and parents can work together to eliminate many dangers, can learn to anticipate others, and can figure out solutions to problems that pose hazards to children inside their homes and out in their communities. The chapter starts with safety in the home, for not only is this the place where children spend most of their time, but it is also the place where most accidents occur. Parents and children are then instructed in how to take a walk through the community to identify and discuss the kinds of hazards children will encounter there. Every child also needs to be given careful instruction before being left at home alone, even if it is only for fifteen minutes. Finally, this chapter offers numerous "what if" situations that are likely to confront children in their homes and neighborhoods.

Everyone knows that accidents will happen, and that the home is where most accidents occur. Children can be hit by cars on their own streets, get burned in their own kitchens, or be mugged in their own neighborhoods. Real, even life-threatening dangers exist both inside and outside the home, and some families feel so apprehensive about the many possible emergencies which could arise that they hesitate to grant children much independence or opportunities to do things. Of course, no one can ever anticipate every danger, and even the most protected child can still encounter danger or incur an injury. One mother who called herself a "worrier" told about the time when she began to realize that even she could not anticipate and circumvent every possible danger.

I read a story in the paper about an accident that was so far-fetched I realized I could not anticipate everything that could go wrong. A seven-year-old girl was taking her dog for a walk in a meadow near her home. The dog was on a metal leash. When the dog happened to urinate on an exposed electrical junction box, it was electrocuted. The shock traveled up the leash and nearly electrocuted the child. Ever since I read that story, I have felt somewhat relieved because I realized I just could not think of everything. That girl's parents could not have been expected to anticipate this danger, nor could the child have been warned about it. It was just beyond one's imagination.

Household Safety

It is worth the effort to walk through your house and study it with safety in mind. Although you can't anticipate everything, you can certainly clean up many potential problems. Taking your time, walk from room to room in your own house, talking with your children. Where do you see dangers? Are there fire hazards? Scary places? Dangerous electrical appliances? Places a child could get burned or cut or have a fall? Are there problems an adult can solve easily but a child cannot? As you walk from place to place, together, try to answer some of these specific questions.

Basic Security

- ☐ Can your children reach and operate the lock if they are expected to open the door alone?
- ☐ Is there an outside light to illuminate the keyhole on dark winter afternoons?
- ☐ Have you hidden an emergency key? Be sure it is subtle. The Brookstone stores or mail order catalogues offer several possibilities, such as a "Key Rock" or a "Key Safe," or devise your own solution.
- ☐ What are the things to do as one leaves the house? (Turn off lights, close and lock windows, take care of animals, lock all doors, remember keys, leave radio on, etc.)
- ☐ Is there an emergency phone list near the telephone containing the numbers of police, fire, doctor, parents' work, neighbors, friends, relatives, poison center, ambulance, hospital, or others? You may decide to use the format provided in chapter 4 (see page 151) or devise your own. Update the emergency phone list periodically, and be certain it is kept in two places — near the telephone and on or near the family calendar or bulletin board.
- ☐ When you leave children with a sitter, do you have instructions ready? (Medication schedule, bedtime, eating instructions, phone number where parents can be reached, etc.)
- ☐ Should you purchase a computerized memory dialer for your telephone that provides automatic dialing? Parents can set up such devices to dial several emergency numbers (such as police and fire departments) and can put simple symbols of these resources on the different buttons so children can reach these numbers easily.
- ☐ Has your family made a list of things that children can do and things that children cannot do? Is it posted and discussed periodically?

Electrical Safety

- ☐ Does your child know where the fuse box or circuit-breaker box is in case a fuse blows or lights go out? Can a broken circuit be detected and closed? Do you have flashlights available? Does your child know how to light candles safely?
- ☐ Does your child know NOT to plug in electrical appliances with wet hands, clothes, or shoes? And NOT to attempt to remove food from plugged-in toasters with metal utensils? And NOT to clean appliances when they are plugged in? Are there too many cords plugged into an electrical outlet?
- ☐ Are there any appliances that have frayed wires? Can people trip over cords on floors? Are there any appliances that need special plugs? Do any plugs, cords, or sockets look dangerous?
- ☐ Can your child fix a snack without using stove, electrical appliances, and sharp knives?
- ☐ Does your child understand rules for use of the stove when no adults are present?

Fire

- ☐ Are there potential fire hazards such as old rags, cans of lighter fluid or gasoline, or piles of paper lying around?
- ☐ Is there more than one way for the family to escape from each room in case of fire? Does the family know what to do to escape? Has the family practiced a fire drill? Does everyone know the designated place for meeting outside in case of a fire?
- ☐ Are there smoke detectors, fire alarms, and fire extinguishers, all in working order? Does your child know how to operate them?
- ☐ Do your children know what to do if their clothes catch on fire?
- ☐ Do your children know how to report a fire and have you practiced it?

First Aid and Personal Safety

- ☐ Does your child know first-aid procedures well enough to deal with someone choking, suffering from burns, deep cuts, or broken bones?
- ☐ Are there toys and other articles in places which could cause people to trip?
- ☐ Are medicines, poisons, matches, knives, and dangerous tools out of young children's reach?
- ☐ Is there a complete first-aid kit in either the kitchen or bathroom, and does everyone know where it is and what is in it?
- ☐ Do you have a bottle of ipecac syrup available in case it is the proper remedy for a poisoning?
- ☐ Is there a first-aid chart posted in a suitable place?

Safety in the Neighborhood

It is also worth the time to walk through your neighborhood with your children to show them potential dangers and to discuss solutions. Telling children at home is not enough. As parents and children walk together, children should be encouraged to share their fears, reservations, or inquiries. Whenever possible, children should be taught by example or modeling. The learning process is reinforced when children are shown how to do something in addition to being given verbal instructions. Don't simply tell children how to use pedestrian lights or crosswalks. Show them!

Taking your time, walk around your community with your children. Where do you see dangers? Children notice hazards that adults may not see and vice versa. Where are there dangers from cars, from getting lost, or from strange people? How can these dangers be avoided or minimized? What are sources of help?

- How many intersections are there between school and home? Practice crossing each one together; do it more than once.
- Are there dangerous places in the neighborhood? (Woods, rivers, storm sewers, empty houses, construction sites, road construction?) What are your rules about them?
- Can your children identify safe places to play? (Playgrounds, certain backyards, schoolyards, and others?)
- What public places in the community may be safe for children to go to in an emergency? (Fire station, police station, library, church, school, store, or other?) In some communities there are special programs, such as a "block house" program, where certain homes are identified by special insignias as places that are safe to go to for help.
- Do your children know what to do if they are being followed? (Hail a cab, go to public places, scream, or don't go into your own home if it is empty.)

- Can your children identify community people by badge and uniform? (Police, crossing guards, fire fighters, emergency medical technicians, and other such helpers?)
- Does your community have emergency phones, citizens' boxes, or any special dial-a-friend or dial-for-help programs? Does your child know how to use them?
- Does your community have a protection program for children? Are they recommending fingerprinting?
- Does your child know the name of your neighborhood; its boundaries; its main streets? Does your child know his or her address, phone number, and the location of your house?
- What methods of public transportation are available and what are their routes and schedules?
- If your children walk or ride a bicycle around town, are they aware of the rules of the road?



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- Do your children carry a Kid's Emergency Kit with identification, change, snack, key? A medical alert card with emergency information, a parental consent form, physician's locator data, and a list of allergies, blood type, and routine medication might be included in this kit.

Description of a Kid's Emergency Kit

It is recommended that each child work with a parent in preparing a Kid's Emergency Kit — a compact, portable kit (a small box) that children can easily carry with them in a backpack or school bag while away from home. Parent and child should decide what should be included. While doing this, it is natural for them to engage in conversation regarding what to do when a child misses a bus or has taken the wrong bus by mistake. Contents for a Kid's Emergency Kit might include change for phone calls and money for special transportation, such as a cab; a medical identification card; a house key; a list of telephone numbers, including parents' workplaces, neighbors, relatives, and police; and a nutritious snack or even some candy. A child who used his kit one day reported, "I really liked having hard candies and fire balls in my kit when I was stressed out! They were just great to suck on and lasted a long time while I waited for my father to come and get me. It was much better than a nutritious snack!" Don't put your last name or your address in the kit.



Children Home Alone

American families increasingly find that children may need to be left alone in the house for certain lengths of time. No child can be left alone for two or three hours each day and be expected to be independent, resourceful, and involved for the entire time. It is just an unrealistic expectation. However, around the age of ten, most children are able to handle short periods of time alone at home successfully, especially if parents prepare them for it carefully.

The best way to do this is to start with very short periods of time — say, fifteen minutes while you take a sitter home or run a quick errand. Always give children a clear understanding of how long they will be alone and where you will be. If your destination (the post office or grocery store) makes it impossible to give the child a phone number, then the child should have the phone number of one or two nearby neighbors, in addition to the usual emergency phone list (see page 151).

Gradually, children become able to handle larger blocks of time alone. The key to success in leaving children alone is planning and not asking too much of them. Parents should be sure that children know what their choices are during the time they are alone; otherwise, the time may seem depressing, endless, and lonesome. It helps to structure the time that the child will be alone; the child will then be better able to use it well. A note such as the one shown on page 202 is a good idea.

Notes may have more or less specific instructions depending on the age of the child, and the length of time the child will be alone. The idea is to inform the child of things that need to be done, but also to remind the child that the parent or another trusted adult can be reached by phone. Don't make a laundry list of things to do, but rather, a menu of choices and options. Decide how specifically you want to write up responsibilities and free time activities for your child. When children are accustomed to having and making several specific choices, they are better able to fill larger blocks of time.

Parents and children need a specific system for checking in with one another. This includes not only the initial call when the child arrives home after school but also the parents' periodic call to see if the homework has been done, if children have eaten their snack, and what their plans are. Sometimes it is easier for a busy parent to take the responsibility for calling in rather than having the child call several times to try to track down a parent in meetings.

It is very useful to have an organized method of communicating with your child, through notes, phone messages, tape

Hi Willie - How was your day at school? Did you give Mrs. Jones my note? Call me - remember I'm at a meeting - so call me at 474-9982. Turn the heat up and turn the lights on in the livingroom. Get the mail and see if you have any. There is a great snack in the frig. If you don't feel like doing your homework just yet, there's a new computer game in the study. Try to learn it and you can show me. Also - set the table for supper + feed the bird. See you between 6.00 and 6.15 - Dad

recorder or daily calendar and bulletin board. A format is provided in chapter 6. A bulletin board that is creatively designed and frequently updated can provide your child with practical information such as Messages, Important Phone Numbers, Emergency Guidelines, Special Family List of Safety Rules, and Routine Reminders. Creative suggestions and activity choices for time alone can also be provided by listing Reading Ideas, Records and Tapes, No-Bake Recipes, OK TV Time or Shows and Favorite and Special Things to Do.

When you leave your children home alone you should get home at the expected time. However, your child needs to understand that there will be times when you may be late because of unforeseen circumstances, such as heavy traffic. Always try to call when you will be delayed.

Periodically, talk with your child about what he or she did while alone, and how it felt to be alone. Ask if there was anything that he or she became scared about or anything that was of concern. It is important to evaluate this experience frequently. Keep these questions in mind: Is my child able to follow this routine relatively easily? Do we continue the communication process when apart for extended periods of time? Has my child developed any fears regarding the dark, strangers, or being alone? Is my child making good use of the time alone, or does the child only say, "Not much," or "I was bored," or "I did stuff."? Does my child have lots of little problems that necessitate several phone calls in the course of an hour? On the other hand, does my child never report any problems? Is he or she taking too much responsibility? Do I see any obvious changes in my child's behavior regarding eating habits, friendships, ability to concentrate, seriousness, and sense of humor? Are these indications of trouble?

Be certain that you and your child do rewarding things together so that your child feels good about the accomplishment of staying at home alone. Your child needs to hear you say, "You did a good job this week, and you've really grown in responsibility."

Talking about Safety; Preparing for Safety

The best way to teach safety measures is to involve the family in safety exercises and to teach by doing whenever possible. Children learn rules of safety best by practicing for a given situation, but talking with them about safety can also help them understand the dangers they may face and ways they can protect themselves. Both talking and doing should be part of the family's safety program.

Parents do need to talk frankly about dangers and hazards that children may be exposed to. They also need to listen patiently to children's fears and concerns. Such talks often reveal that children are fearful about the same dangers as parents are. In addition, parents often realize that children have some fears which need to be voiced and accepted in order to be overcome. When children name their fears — of a ghost in a closet or something awful in the basement — experienced parents know not to call these fears silly or laugh at them. Such fears can be investigated together — maybe even while holding hands — and the "imaginary" dangers can be dealt with as well as the more "real" ones.

Helping children to be safe demands recognizing that children may become involved in unpleasant situations. For example, a major concern for all parents is strangers approaching their children. A child can be told in an authoritarian voice to "stay away from strangers" and be given no further explanation. The tone delivers the message, but will it help alleviate fears or provide useful background information to a child under stress? Probably not. In fact, this method may induce fear.

Consider the elements involved in the statement — "Stay away from strangers!" There is no definition of who is a stranger. Children may assume that anyone to whom they have not yet been introduced fits into this category. Ask yourself how many people your child has actually been introduced to, and you'll soon realize that there are many strangers from your child's perspective. Instead, parents can suggest that their children ask themselves

three questions: "Do I know this person's name?", "Have I seen this person before?", and "Do I know what this person does in the community?" This situation can be role-played to help children memorize these questions. The child learns that if the answer to all these questions is "No," the person really *is* a stranger. If such a person actually appears one afternoon at the front door, the child then may remember that this is a strange person to him, and knows not to open the door, and, immediately, to call for help.

Discussions which focus on dangers can help the family generate guidelines and procedures for dealing with potential safety problems. Both parents and children should name the dangers which concern them. Conversations about these dangers and guidelines will make family members more prepared to act appropriately when problems arise. From family reports, a typical list includes the following:

- Fires, which could originate in the stove, furnace, appliances, or from playing with matches.
- Accidents and injuries, which include serious cuts, burns, poisonings, falls, choking, and automobile, bike, and sporting accidents.
- Trouble with other people: children getting mugged or being followed home; break-ins; children witnessing someone breaking into a neighbor's house; strangers coming to the door; crank calls or strangers asking if parents are home.
- Problems that can arise outside the house, like losing keys, having toys stolen, or getting lost.
- Children and pets getting sick.
- Children fighting with siblings or other children.
- Children experiencing loneliness, fright, or having little chance to play with friends.
- Children shoplifting, either as witnesses or as participants.
- Natural disasters such as earthquakes, tornadoes, or storms which are possible in your region.

Of course, talking about dangers does not guarantee that children (or grown-ups) will know exactly how to respond to every emergency. One never knows for sure how one will react to a crisis. Nevertheless, there is value in discussing dangers and how to handle them. Thinking about problems, generating solutions in advance, and practicing what to do when possible gives a child some emotional and cognitive poise when the inevitable crises occur.



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Following are a series of real situations which have arisen in families. Each one of these stories could be the basis for a family discussion about whether this could happen and what could be done if it did happen. After each story are some possible solutions for the child, and some guidelines for family safety. These solutions and guidelines should give you some ideas for further family discussions and practical measures your family might take to ensure children's safety. You may also want to invent stories that relate more directly to your family situation.

Ideas for Talks about Fires

● **WHAT HAPPENED:** Jillian's mother has stepped out for an hour. Jillian decides to surprise her mother by making a batch of fudge. The telephone rings while she is melting butter in a pot on the gas stove. While she talks on the phone, the cookbook, which is too close to the flames, catches on fire. What would you do if you were Jillian?

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS FOR CHILD

- ☐ Shut off the stove.
- ☐ Use a fire extinguisher.
- ☐ Throw baking soda onto the fire.
- ☐ Drop a large cooking pot over the book to smother the fire.
- ☐ Ask the friend on the phone to call for help.
- ☐ If the fire is out of control, close the door, leave the house, and go for help.

GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY SAFETY

Allow children to use the stove only when parents are home.
Develop and practice kitchen safety rules; for example, pot handles towards the back of stove, no running or ball play in kitchen, no floppy sleeves when cooking.
Have a canister of baking soda by the stove.
Have a serviceable fire extinguisher available, and be sure all know how to use it.
Install smoke and/or heat detectors.
Collect no-bake recipes.
Devise and practice fire escape routes.
Keep a list of emergency telephone numbers; put it near the telephone.

*Ideas for
Talks
about Fires*

● **WHAT HAPPENED:** Robert is making a paint-by-number oil painting which he wants to give his mother at dinner. To speed up the drying process, he uses his mother's hair dryer. The dryer is plugged into a socket also being used by a clock radio, lamp, and record player. Robert notices smoke and flames coming out of the socket. If you were Robert, what would you do?

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS FOR CHILD

- ☐ Turn off switches for all these appliances.
- ☐ Leave the room immediately and close the door.
- ☐ Locate nearby adults for help.
- ☐ Call the fire department.
- ☐ Go to the circuit box and break all the circuits.

GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY SAFETY

Never overload electrical outlets.

Never use extension cords for heat-producing appliances
such as hair dryers, irons, toasters, or space heaters.

Replace frayed electrical cords.

Discard old appliances in disrepair.

Have a fire extinguisher on each floor of the house.

Talk with children about the hazards of electrical appliances.

Instruct children not to touch electrical plugs if something
looks wrong.

Instruct children in the proper use of appliances.

Have the electrical system checked periodically.

Keep a list of emergency telephone numbers:
put it near the telephone.

Ideas for Talks about Accidents and Injuries

● **WHAT HAPPENED:** Nine-year-old Patrick enjoys inventing new snacks. As Patrick is slicing a tomato for a pizza treat, he cuts his finger, and blood starts spurting out. He calls for his sixteen-year-old sister in the next room. If you were Patrick or his sister, what would you do?

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS FOR CHILD

- ☐ Wash off the blood and check to see how deep the cut is. If the bleeding continues and the cut is deep, cover with gauze bandage and apply pressure. Contact parents and decide how to get to the emergency room for stitches.
- ☐ Cover with Band-aid if cut is not too deep.

GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY SAFETY

Teach basic first-aid skills.

Have a well-supplied first-aid kit available in an agreed-upon location.

Don't allow a child to use dangerous utensils without presence of an adult.

Make arrangements with neighbors to help in case of emergency.

Keep a list of emergency telephone numbers: put it near the telephone.

***Talks about
Accidents and
Injuries***

● **WHAT HAPPENED:** Ten-year-old Steven is in charge of his five-year-old sister Julie. When Steven checks on Julie in the kitchen, he finds her eating chewable vitamins. He notices the bottle is half empty. If you were Steven, what would you do?

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS FOR CHILD

- ☐ Take bottle away immediately.
- ☐ Remove remaining vitamins from mouth.
- ☐ Call a parent or neighbor to find out how full the bottle was.
- ☐ Call a poison control center and follow their directions.

GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY SAFETY

Keep medicines and toxic substances out of children's reach.

Have poison control center telephone number on the list of emergency numbers next to the telephone.

Have ipecac syrup available to induce vomiting if so instructed.

Explain to children about substances that can be poisonous.

● **WHAT HAPPENED:** Cheryl, a third-grader, has to cross a four-lane city street to get to her school bus stop. One morning, she manages to cross the first two lanes and then stands on the yellow line waiting to cross the other two lanes. A car in the nearest lane stops, and Cheryl runs for the other side. Her friend Amy, who is at the bus stop, sees a car coming on the right and calls to Cheryl to be careful. But it is too late. The driver doesn't see Cheryl, and the car hits her just before she reaches the curb. If you were Amy, what would you do?

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS FOR CHILDREN

- ☐ Tell someone to call for an ambulance and/or for the police.
- ☐ Wait and don't move Cheryl if she can't move by herself.
- ☐ Keep Cheryl warm. Put your coat or sweater over her to try to prevent her from going into shock.
- ☐ If the driver hasn't stopped, try to remember the color, make, and license plate of the car — tell it to the first person who comes on the scene.
- ☐ Make sure an adult realizes that both of you need help.

GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY SAFETY

Decide if a certain street is just too dangerous for a child to cross alone, and arrange for adult assistance.

Always cross the street at a traffic light and use the crosswalk and pedestrian light.

Don't cross a big, busy street alone; wait for another child or a grown-up to cross with you.

Remember that cars come in each lane of the street, and you must cross each one separately and carefully.

Remember that it is sometimes hard for drivers to see children.

Practice crossing streets together and talk regularly about how to be a safe pedestrian.

Ideas for Talks about Dangerous People and Dangerous Situations

● **WHAT HAPPENED:** Susan notices that a man is following her on her way home from school. She is approaching her house. If you were Susan, what would you do?

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS FOR CHILD

- ☐ Look for a friendly, well-dressed adult and tell the person that a man is following you.
- ☐ Look for the sign of a safe home — a “block house” — and go in.
- ☐ If you know that no adult is at your home, go to the house of a neighbor who is home.
- ☐ Make plans to walk home routinely with another child.

GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY SAFETY

Help children to make a list of places to go to in case of emergency.
Help children understand how to select a stranger to ask for help.
Suggest that children look for adults in uniform or adults with other children.

● **WHAT HAPPENED:** As Tamara walks home from her friend's house, a car stops, and the driver asks her if she knows where Winter Street is. He asks if she could get into the car and show him how to get there. He keeps saying, "I don't understand, and it would be great if you could help me." What would you do if you were Tamara?

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS FOR CHILD

- ☐ Say "No," and keep walking.
- ☐ Don't stop unless you know the person.
- ☐ Walk in the opposite direction from the car.
- ☐ Go to the nearest friend's home or "block house."
- ☐ Don't appear to be afraid.

GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY SAFETY

Discuss with children the importance of never getting into a car with a stranger.

Encourage children to write down license plate numbers, model and color of car, and descriptions of suspicious people.

Encourage children to talk to parents about these cases.

Ask children if they've seen the person before or know the person's name.

Talk to the police about the situation.

***Talks about
Dangerous People
and Dangerous
Situations***

● **WHAT HAPPENED:** Michelle is in charge of locking the door each morning, and she is the first to return home in the afternoon. One day she notices the door is slightly ajar, and she is very sure she locked it that morning. She thinks someone is in the house.

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS FOR CHILD

- ☐ Do not go in the house if something seems suspicious.
- ☐ Go to a neighbor's house and call the police.
- ☐ Decide who should be called at work — mother or father.

GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY SAFETY

Review the security of your household and see if it needs to be improved.

Periodically change the tumbler in the door lock and supply the family with new keys.

Equip child with Kid's Emergency Kit — including change, identification, phone numbers, snacks, and other useful items.

● **WHAT HAPPENED:** A man in a uniform is at the door when Justin goes to answer it. Speaking through the window, the man says he is from the gas company and must read the meter. Justin's parents did not tell him to expect anyone. If you were Justin, what would you do?

*Talks about
Dangerous People
and Dangerous
Situations*

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS FOR CHILD

- ☐ Don't let him in.
- ☐ Don't open the door; continue to talk through the window.
- ☐ Tell him your parent is lying down and to please return another day.
- ☐ Immediately call parents.
- ☐ If person remains on the property, call the police.

GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY SAFETY

Instruct children never to admit a stranger into the house, no matter how insistent the person is.

Have child practice what to say and to anticipate similar situations.

Always let children know where parents can be reached.

Have mirror installed outside the house and be certain everyone in the household knows about it.

Install a small magic eye or peephole in the door so one can see who is outside.

***Talks about
Dangerous People
and Dangerous
Situations***

● **WHAT HAPPENED:** Debbie always answers the phone when she's home alone. One day someone she doesn't know calls and asks if her mother is home. If you were Debbie, what would you do?

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS FOR CHILD

Reply:

- ☐ "Yes, she's home, but she's in the shower; let me take your number and she'll call you back."
- ☐ "Yes, but she's outside right now; let me take your number and she'll call you."
- ☐ "Yes, but she's taking a nap. I can have her call you back."
- ☐ "Yes, but she's busy. Can she call you back?"
- ☐ Call a parent or friend and talk for a while to relax. This way the person can't call back.

GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY SAFETY

Instruct children never to say they are home alone.

Let children know where parents can be reached at all times.

Make arrangements with neighbors to be available to comfort child in such cases.

Ideas for Talks about Things that Can Go Wrong Outside the House

● **WHAT HAPPENED:** As Dana approaches the front door, he realizes that he doesn't have his house key that was on a key chain. If you were Dana, what would you do?

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS FOR CHILD

- ☐ Use spare key if one has been hidden.
- ☐ Go to a friend's or neighbor's house. Get a key if one is there, or stay there.
- ☐ Call parents at work to let them know where you'll be when they return home.

GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY SAFETY

Find a safe place to hide a spare key.

Do not attach identification to any key.

Make arrangements with neighbors to be available in case of emergency.

Let children know where parents can be reached.

Change locks if key is lost and identification is with it.

Never let children wear house keys around their necks. This is an invitation to trouble, even if the key is under the child's clothing.

*Things that
Can Go Wrong
Outside the
House*

● **WHAT HAPPENED:** Ten-year-old Jeffrey was riding his new bike at a playground near his home. A fifteen-year-old boy came up to Jeffrey and asked to borrow the bike. Jeffrey said "No," but the older boy, who was much bigger than Jeffrey, said, "Listen, I really want to try it," and he pushed Jeffrey. The big boy took the bike and never came back.

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS FOR CHILD

- ☐ If possible, say "No," and ride away. Look for a friendly adult to tell about the problem.
- ☐ If you feel that you are physically endangered, give up the bike.
- ☐ If there are other children or adults around, yell for help.
- ☐ Try to remember what the boy looked like and what he was wearing. Call the police to report the stolen bike.

GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY SAFETY

Buy second-hand bikes.

Talk about which playgrounds seem safe for younger children.

Consider whether a parent should accompany children to the park.

Talk about the value of children's safety, and make sure children understand that their safety is more important than saving the bike.

Help children learn to anticipate danger and be wary about other children whose behavior may become threatening.

● **WHAT HAPPENED:** Richard is a tall, likeable twelve-year-old (nearly thirteen) who appears self-confident. He lives in a rural community and recently visited his older sister in a large city. When it was time for him to return home, his sister dropped Richard off at the correct gate at the bus terminal fifteen minutes before the bus was to depart. He got confused and missed the bus. He had some extra money, but he lost it in the pay phone. If you were Richard, what would you do?

*Things that
Can Go Wrong
Outside the
House*

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS FOR CHILD

- ☐ If you are in trouble, there are usually police, guards, or officials at bus, train, and airline terminals. Ask such a person for help if you are lost or out of money.
- ☐ Call home collect; ask a bus station guard for help if you need it.

GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY SAFETY

When you travel alone, be sure you have extra money, both change and bills. Do not keep all your money in one place. Put an extra dollar or two in each sock.

Discuss fully with children how to get help in a place where they don't know anyone.

Be sure children carry home and work phone numbers of people at both ends of the trip.

Be sure to teach children how to make a collect phone call. This is an essential survival skill.

Teach children to use emergency phone services, like dialing "0" or "911" for help.

Don't assume that because a child appears self-confident that he really understands all of the rules for safety. Frequent review is necessary even for older children.

Ideas for Talks about Children or Pets Getting Sick

● **WHAT HAPPENED:** Kendra takes her dog for a walk every day. One afternoon, while her mother is at a meeting, the dog is limping and refuses to go outdoors. It throws up on the rug and cowers in the corner. If you were Kendra, what would you do?

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS FOR CHILD

- ☐ Take away all food and water from the dog.
- ☐ Call parents at work.
- ☐ Call the veterinarian, describe what happened, and ask what to do.

GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY SAFETY

Let children know where parents can be reached.

Have family learn about basic animal care.

Children need help to understand that their animals are their responsibilities. However, even well-cared-for animals can get sick.

Ideas for Talks about Children Fighting

● **WHAT HAPPENED:** Candy is the middle child in a family of three children. Her thirteen-year-old sister Carla is sometimes put in charge of taking care of her and their nine-year-old brother Billy. One day Billy starts to irritate Carla. She asks him numerous times to stop; he doesn't. She starts chasing him around the kitchen table; he runs to his room and blockades the door with his body. Carla, outraged, pounds the door with a pair of scissors, which she drops after she pushes the door open. Now Carla seriously starts choking Billy. If you were Candy, what would you do?

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS FOR CHILD

- ☐ Break the cycle: push yourself between Carla and Billy.
- ☐ Run and get a neighbor.
- ☐ Yell and get the two of them to stop.

GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY SAFETY

When children are fighting a great deal, they should not be left alone.

Hire an experienced sitter.

Establish family rules and make punishment clear and enforceable.

Be willing to listen to each alone and then all together.

Work out a firm agreement or pact about fighting that all three children accept.

***Talks about
Children
Fighting***

● **WHAT HAPPENED:** Delia is six years old; Rachel is her nine-year-old sister. Whatever toys Delia plays with, or whatever project she's involved with, Rachel decides to do the same. Rachel then tells her younger sister how to use the toys. Delia rarely complains, but when she does, Rachel yells and blames things on Delia. The parents then yell at Delia for causing trouble. If you were Delia, what would you do?

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS FOR CHILD

- ☐ Talk to your parents when Rachel isn't there.
- ☐ Go to another play area without Rachel.

GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY SAFETY

Observe children playing and try to understand the complexities of instigation and revenge. A parent does not have to become the judge, but can sympathize and be objective about what is going on.

Older siblings are often expected to be responsible and that is not necessary.

When children are to stay alone together, instead of putting the older one in charge, tell them that each is responsible for the other.

Some children should not be left alone together without an adult.

Ideas for Talks about Being Afraid

● **WHAT HAPPENED:** Eleven-year-old Mary hates being alone every day after school while she waits for her father to get home. Although she is only alone forty-five minutes, Mary wonders what she'll do by herself. When he was on a different schedule, she got used to her father fixing her a snack and talking to her after school. Mary wonders if she'll be lonely or scared. If you were Mary's father, what would you do to help Mary feel good about being alone?

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS FOR FATHER AND CHILD

- ☐ Every week, draw up a schedule of what Mary wants to do each afternoon.
- ☐ Try to vary the plan for the short time she is alone each day.
- ☐ Together go over the house and talk about what could scare Mary in each room.
- ☐ Review all the emergency and security procedures. Stock the first-aid kit.
- ☐ Hide an extra key.
- ☐ List friends or people Mary can call if she's lonely or scared.

GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY SAFETY

Listen to the child's concerns and try to find solutions.

Do not leave the child alone if she clearly cannot cope with the responsibility.

Consider having Mary turn on the radio or stereo.

Have someone she can talk to on the phone when she first gets home.

Generate a list of things that Mary might do when she is alone and be certain that the supplies are available.

Ideas for Talks about Shoplifting

● **WHAT HAPPENED:** Ricky and his friends enjoy going to the department store and browsing in the record department. One day one of his friends steals a record album. If you were Ricky, what would you do?

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS FOR CHILD

- ☐ Leave the store immediately without your friend.
- ☐ Talk to your friend later and explain why you think stealing is wrong.
- ☐ Discuss the situation with your parents.
- ☐ Consider finding new friends if it happens again.

GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY SAFETY

Help children figure out what is "right" and "wrong." Encourage open communication by listening and discussing the difficult issues involved.

Understand that it is not easy for one child to tell on another.

Always show that you think shoplifting is unacceptable by your own behavior.

Be alert and aware if children are accumulating items from unknown sources.

Talks about Other Dangers Relevant to Your Family Situation

No one can think of everything, but by spending time working on safety inside and outside the household, and by talking about safety with children, many of the most common dangers can be avoided and families can work together to ensure children's safety. Think about your own family situation and review the specific events that relate to your child's daily activities.

Talks about your family situations:

What could happen:

Suggested solutions for child:

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

Guidelines for family safety:



JANE SCHERR

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A Few Useful Self-Help Books for Children

Dinosaurs, Beware! by Marc Brown and Stephen Krensky (Little, Brown and Company; Boston, 1982) is a safety book for children, providing tips on accident prevention and illustrations of potential dangers.

The Official Kids' Survival Kit by Elaine Chabeck and Pat Fortunato (Little, Brown and Company; Boston, 1981) is an alphabetical guide of how to do many things on your own. In addition to hints for taking care of the house and medical situations, the book discusses what to do when one has had an argument with someone or what to do when one is lonely.

What Would You Do If . . . : A Kid's Guide to First Aid by Lorry Freeman (Parenting Press; Seattle, 1983) is a series of vignettes setting up situations where emergency medical treatment is required. Through pictures and concise instructions, the child learns to give initial, immediate care.

By Yourself by Sara Gilbert (Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Books; New York, 1983) is an easy-to-read book for the child who is home alone. This book focuses on how a child may feel when left alone and what to do in different situations, from helping out at home to staying safe.

In Charge: A Complete Handbook for Kids with Working Parents by Kathy S. Kyte (Alfred A. Knopf; New York, 1983) is for children who spend some time at home alone, before/after school or during school vacations, while parents are at work. This book helps with the organizing of plans and schedules, and provides suggestions for coping with situations ranging from accidents to cooking dinner and doing the laundry.

Play It Safe by Kathy S. Kyte (Alfred A. Knopf; New York, 1983) is a companion book to *In Charge* which educates a child about crime so a child can protect himself. Advice is provided on a

*Parents and
children are
encouraged
to read
these books
together*

variety of safety situations at home, on public transportation, and on personal attitudes.

On My Own: The Kid's Self-Care Book by Lynette Long (Acropolis Books Ltd.; Washington, D.C., 1984) is a resource-filled text for children eight to twelve years old who are home alone at any time of the day for any length of time. The book is a personal workbook for the child and family to prepare the child for staying alone. Specific resources are offered as well as space to individualize the text to each family's situation. A quiz at the end of the book is a handy indicator of children's ability to take care of themselves on their own.

The Handbook for Latchkey Children and Their Parents by Lynette and Thomas Long (Arbor House; New York, 1983) provides children and parents with some ways to make the best of leaving children alone for long periods of time. The stresses, fears, dangers, and casualties of the latchkey child are discussed, and some solutions are provided. The book is not designed for a child to use alone. The information on employer- and community-sponsored child care programs provides a range of options for people to consider in meeting the needs of school-age children who are unsupervised each day for significant periods of time.

Home Alone by Eleanor Schick (The Dial Press; New York, 1980) is an easy-to-read book for young children (four to eight) who come home alone after school. The book presents an accurate picture of what it is like for the child from the time he arrives home until a parent returns from work. The specific things a child must think about and do, such as lock the door, take phone messages, get meat out of the freezer for dinner, and do homework, as well as check in with Mom and Dad at work, are portrayed and described.

Parents have responsibilities for family security that are different from those of children, chiefly in the purchase, installation, and maintenance of safety equipment. Making sure the furnace is cleaned every year, making sure gas appliances and fixtures are properly installed, providing fire escapes or fire ladders, being certain that the electrical service is adequate and is working properly, storing poisonous or flammable chemicals in a safe place, and putting fences around ponds, pools, or wells are all responsibilities which parents must assume, and they routinely *do* consider this their province. There are many books and pamphlets that present and explain problems and solutions in the area of household safety. Some of the best are described in Appendix F (see page 311).

After adults have taken care of these responsibilities as well as they can, there are still many issues to be worked out as a family. Children and parents together can develop strategies for protecting children's safety, whether the parents are right beside them, in another room of the house, or not at home at all. Everyone will be more relaxed and confident about children's independence if fears have been confronted and if everyone understands the family's rules and guidelines for safety. Together families can work out specific strategies for coping with emergencies which will still arise.



JANE SCHERR

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Putting It All Together

PARENTS AND CHILDREN have been “putting it all together” since each infant joined the household. But now, when children are six or older, new pieces have to be combined with old to be sure that the best use is made of their out-of-school time. This stage requires that parents track down resources for their children, seek out good instructors and coaches, map out schedules that will allow for a good balance of activity, assign chores commensurate with each child’s capabilities, and see to it that their children are as safe as is reasonably possible. It is a big responsibility, but it is also an exciting one as parents help guide their children through the middle childhood years.

A Few Warnings

A first warning: don't feel you must implement all your new ideas immediately. Don't feel you must enroll your child in one or two new activities tomorrow or fill out every chart tonight. One mother who read this book decided to put it into effect immediately. When she was working at her desk at home, her two children came to see her and said, "We haven't got anything to do." She pulled out a list of possible activities they could pursue. Then she showed them a new list of chores that she thought they might do around the house. She went back to work, and left the children with the charts. They immediately scribbled on the charts and drew big Xs on every page. No wonder. They had never seen these charts before and were bored by the whole idea; the charts were alien to them. Later, when the mother and children went through the process together, talking but not attempting to answer every single question, they all found it worthwhile and even intriguing. The process had a more organic feeling, and the children knew that they were being listened to and respected.

A second warning: each child is an individual and has unique qualities that are to be appreciated. What works for another child will not necessarily work for yours.

A third warning: it is not always possible for a child to begin a new activity at the time that best suits the entire family. For example, some organized activities begin only in September when school opens and family schedules are already pretty hectic. Furthermore, it may seem almost impossible to get several children started simultaneously on appropriate activities. Do not despair. If you assemble the information and let it sift through your mind for a day or two, a solution will probably emerge. If it does not, talk about the options with someone you trust; a feasible design will eventually appear.

A fourth warning: nurturing a child's interests is a gradual process. Parents need to have a conviction that it is worth the

necessary energy, time, and money. Children need to be supported through each step.

A fifth warning: it is impossible for your child to develop independence in a month or two. Learning these *other* 3 Rs is also a very gradual process. The habit of reading whenever time permits, picking up a puzzle and making it, experimenting and changing the cookie recipe, and being able to remember and follow through on a daily routine independently takes time. A child needs proper and ongoing education to learn how to be physically safe and how to minimize certain risks. For a child to feel more secure while at home and out in the community he has to be prepared to handle certain physical and psychological risks.

A sixth warning: every child needs to develop skills. This becomes a source of pride and leads to a sense of achievement or mastery. However, children should not be pushed too far, and the objective should not be to go to the Olympics or to have a debut at Carnegie Hall.

A seventh warning: as each family translates the array of opportunities into a specific workable plan for a child, modifications will have to be made as the needs arise because things won't always work perfectly. Little breakdowns occur all the time, even in well-organized families, but remember, it is natural.

Sir William Osler, in an address to the Medical Library Association in 1909, said:

No man is really happy or safe without a hobby, and it makes precious little difference what the outside interest may be — botany, beetles or butterflies; roses, tulips or irises; fishing, mountaineering or antiquities — anything will do so long as he straddles a hobby and rides it hard.¹

Dr. Tenley Albright, the first American woman to win an Olympic gold medal in figure skating, is now a surgeon who specializes in sports medicine. Although the hard work she put in as a young woman in order to become a champion skater does not

directly connect to the work she does as an adult, still the qualities of perseverance, commitment, and self-discipline do have clear application to each. She says that skating and surgery actually have a lot in common. "You're always preparing for something, it really matters if you pay attention, and there's always so much more you can learn."² Her observation might be taken as a principle for anything worth doing.

For many Americans, the islands in the Caribbean may seem to be an ideal place to live and to bring up children. The way of life is easy, the land and sea are beautiful, and the weather is always temperate. But children on these islands are subject to the same influences that affect other children. They watch TV, can't always find a friend, and sometimes think there is little to do. Vanessa, who is now twenty-six, grew up on an island that her parents loved. Her parents were determined to take advantage of their unique situation. The father was a professional photographer, and his passionate involvement in visual studies had a profound influence on all four of their children. When Vanessa was six, the mother threw the television set away, saying, "I can't stand to see these children sit in front of the TV and bite their nails when there is so much else they can do."

Vanessa remembers her mother encouraging her to get out and look at the natural world of the island. Vanessa became fascinated by the tropical fish she saw while snorkeling near her home. She set up a huge saltwater aquarium to hold fish for a few hours while she made detailed drawings of them. She spent hours at the beach sketching and drawing and was always asking her mother for more paper. Her interest in the island grew every year; she studied the colors of the water and always asked questions like, "Which way does the wind blow?" or "Which fish live in the coral reefs?" Vanessa still remembers a day in sixth grade when she realized that she had very different interests from those of her classmates. The teacher asked the sixth graders to talk about their favorite music. Vanessa listened to the others and thought, "Do I

dare tell the truth?" Nearly every child liked rock 'n roll best. Finally, one boy said Tschaikovsky was his favorite, and Vanessa then had the courage to say, "Mozart is my favorite." As she told this story she said, "Heavens! Do parents make a difference!"

Along with these interests, Vanessa's parents helped her persist in taking creative dancing and music lessons. Vanessa is now a professional print-maker who lives in New York City. She calls herself "an artist who is a frustrated skin diver and marine biologist." Her prints are full of the blues and greens of her childhood home, to which she still returns for inspiration. The rich mosaic of music, drawing, and the island environment of Vanessa's childhood still colors and influences her later life.

Vanessa's story contrasts interestingly with Tenley Albright's. Vanessa's was a tropical world with many, varied interests. Tenley Albright grew up in a northern world and had a powerful, focused ambition to become a great skater. But the parents' determination to help their daughters have a meaningful childhood still influences these women as adults. Neither an outside observer nor a parent could have predicted the exact choices that these women would make as adults. But it is now easy to trace the threads of their early experience in their mature lives. The interests and enthusiasms they had in middle childhood became an imperishable part of their adult personalities. The richness of childhood provides material for later life: strength of purpose, a sense of having alternatives, and vivid imagery.

Review What You Know

A parent who is trying to "put it all together" for a child may feel that all the choices are arbitrary, made-up, or imposed by will rather than by nature. Yet it is necessary to make a choice, to settle on something and stick to it for a time. Even though some choices will seem arbitrary, they will lead organically to other things that cannot be foreseen. Of course, some choices must be made in the dark, and, inevitably, some will seem artificial. But a child may

adopt the choice more easily than parents expect. Now is the time to stick to your convictions, to get excited, and to try something new. Don't rely on "play" for everything. Help your child take a leap, and you leap, too. Eventually enthusiasm pays off — it will succeed. When parents insist on waiting for the "perfect" situation, it is possible to wait out a child's middle years. Just realize that all decisions cannot be perfect.

Parents need not agonize about each decision, but it will help to remember the conversations they had with each child about their interests. It will also help parents if they reflect on the observations they made of their children and the notes they made about those moments. Remembering those interactions, a parent may say, "Oh, yes, Ethan really loved working with clay or making a terrarium," or "Deborah wants to do more writing and mural painting than she does." As a child works and plays indoors and outdoors with a range of materials, parents can see which ones really speak to the child and which ones the child really responds to and uses in a resourceful way.



BONNIE KAMIN

It also helps to review the charts that family members filled out or discussed. The chart, *Yes, No, and Maybe* may have revealed some strong "yeses" or a consistent pattern of flickering interests in the "maybe" column. These indications give clues to parents. Often the "maybe's" will provide glimpses into a child's newest thoughts and interests. The chart *What's Fun? What's Fabulous?* may yield some other leads worth exploring, especially for activities to which the child has had little exposure. Likewise, the parent's own thinking in *A Portrait of My Child* offers directions for children's out-of-school time which would not occur to the child alone. This chart helps parents consider a child's temperament, special qualities, strong likes and dislikes.

Many parents try to balance each child's out-of-school life so that it includes both some physical activity (like a sport) and some artistic or creative activity (like music lessons). Parents might also give thought to other kinds of balances. A child's activities might include one with a group and another done alone with an adult. Parents might also consider, does one activity require lots of energy and stamina and another encourage concentration and creativity? Does one activity lead to a product made out of materials and another lead to a skill? If a particular interest like rock collecting has not included much physical activity, could it be expanded? Perhaps rock climbing as a sport could be a natural outgrowth of an interest in geology. A solitary child's interest in reading about birds could be the basis for locating a children's nature class offering group bird walks and nature printing. Some activities like nature classes actually offer many different kinds of experience for a child. Thus, when you as a parent read a description of a community resource, consider the various things it offers your child.

Parents must be willing to learn from experience. For example, a father changed his child-rearing style after he realized he had made a slight error in decisions about his oldest son. Douglas was an unusually gifted boy who was interested in writing and reading. He had a wealth of knowledge about the universe. His father,

who had not liked sports as a child, didn't want to insist that his son pursue any sports, for they had no intrinsic interest to him. However, when Douglas was in the ninth and tenth grades, he was terribly embarrassed that he could play no sports and thus had few friends. He felt ridiculous when he tried to play sports with the other people in his class.

The family realized that perhaps they had made a mistake in not encouraging this child to pursue at least one sport. As they set about helping him, they also started his eight-year-old brother, Russell, on soccer and baseball. Douglas' story had an unusual solution. A sixty-year-old friend of the family proposed that he take up tennis lessons with Douglas. It was an inspired solution, since the man was always worse than Douglas and yet was his elder. The coach worked with both of them and eventually had them playing in town tennis matches at their levels. Douglas naturally encouraged his brother Russell to go to practice and work hard at sports since he now thought it really mattered.

Parents can also consider if they are doing all they can to promote children's independence. This book suggests some ways that households can be organized to help children begin to master the *other 3 Rs* — resourcefulness, responsibility, and reliability — certainly these suggestions do not begin to exhaust the possibilities. Parents need to have the conviction that children can gradually acquire a sense of inner direction. If children seem aimless, bored, unchallenged, and disorganized at home, there may be some very concrete measures the family can take to channel children into directed, purposeful activity. Maybe children only need the fresh stimulation of having a friend come over, some new games, books or different craft materials to get back on a track of self-direction. Maybe you need to talk things over to find out how your child feels about the independence you have granted. Maybe you're expecting too much or too little. Sometimes children are overwhelmed by the number or type of chores they've been assigned, or bored with the routine nature of them. They may need a change in what they are expected to do.

Beginning to Formulate a Schedule

As parents explore community resources and record findings in the *Community Resources Inventory* (see page 96) or some place else, they discover various options that make sense or seem appropriate for each child. A weekly calendar helps clarify the options for out-of-school time. All the relevant ideas can be recorded, and if there are lots of possibilities, choices may be clearer if they are all placed in competition with one another on a large calendar. Something will have to go, of course. It is ridiculous for a parent to spend every weekday afternoon driving a car around town while children complain that they wish they could play at home. Children and parents together can look at how the afternoons, evenings, and weekends balance out with planned or organized activities, time for homework, and free time. The options that are in the running will sort into alternating time slots, with room left for the other activities that children do.

It gives children a sense of mastery to realize that even when they have some planned or organized activities, there are still large blocks of time for free play. When out-of-school time is divided into clear blocks, it helps children figure out when practice, homework, and chores must be fitted into the whole week. Parents, too, may feel less pressured by car pools, budgets, and other arrangements when the weekly pattern is clearly and explicitly laid out. The weekly schedule for each child obviously needs to be reconciled in some way with the overall weekly schedule for the whole family.

If the *Community Resources Inventory* has yielded little in the way of appealing planned or organized activities for a particular child, parents can now consider what informal, special arrangements could be set up with other families. Taking the lead from children's interests, parents might begin searching for a teacher who is willing to give weekly lessons or to coach a child or group of children. Cooperative and special arrangements that take advantage of early evenings, mornings, or weekends may also be a solution.

The amount of time each child spends in planned or organized out-of-school activities naturally depends upon many factors but between the ages of six and twelve, sensible averages seem to fall between three and six or sometimes seven hours a week. This average does *not* include the time spent in transportation or the time the child is expected to practice at home each day, as with a musical instrument. When children are engaged in team sports, practices are usually arranged for the whole team by the coach. This team practice time *should* be included in the total. This means that in a particular season, if a child is committed to a sport, the child's total time involved in organized activities will probably reach seven hours. Another very important consideration is the amount of time a child spends on religious education. Some children have so many hours scheduled for religious education, it really would be impossible for them to have three to six or seven hours in other planned activities.

The amount of scheduling that works well for one child may not be the same for another child — even if they are the same age. Parents need to talk over the weekly schedule with each child to figure out whether there is not enough planned activity, just about the right amount, or too much. No child should be scheduled all of the time, but generally, it appears that as children get older, they can manage heavier scheduling and not feel too pressured or overwhelmed. One school wrote a note home to parents about the school's system of having children's sports practice at 7:00 A.M. The note said, "It does seem strange that fourth graders who can barely get up at 7:00 A.M. could turn into fifth, sixth, and seventh graders who rise at 5:30 A.M. and then take part in strenuous athletics for an hour from 7:00 until 8:00 A.M. But every year we see the children meet the challenge, and actually enjoy their early practices. Do be sure they get to bed by 8:30 or 9:00 P.M., though!"

Parents have a tendency to arrange a fuller schedule for boys than for girls. There are many reasons for this: one is that, historically, there have been more planned and organized activities for boys, starting with Boy Scouts and Little League. In some



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communities, there still are more extensive athletic facilities and coaching options available for boys. There also seems to be an inclination among parents of boys to be sure that their sons have plenty of organized activity, which they explain in different ways. They want their boys to develop more independence and have varied experiences. They also want their sons to "stay out of trouble," and believe that the group experience and adult supervision of organized sports keeps them busy. In families where both parents work, or in some single parent families, boys seem to be even more heavily scheduled, and sometimes this leads to overload. In any family, for a child of any age or either sex, three sports activities at once are just too much, and children who participate in three during a season definitely suffer from "overload."

As experienced parents know, the signs of overload in children are crankiness, distractability, headaches, and exhaustion. Children who are doing too much have lots of trouble with their homework, seem to yell a lot, and often want to unwind by

staying up late and watching television. Often these children's schedules force them to eat alone, or to want to eat and watch television at the same time.

It may also be that girls' schedules need to be scrutinized to be sure that they have *enough* challenging, organized activities each week. If it is true that girls tend to be more lightly scheduled than boys each week, does this mean that girls do not have the same opportunities as boys to learn discipline, perseverance, and teamwork, or the same chance to excel? It is important to determine if a child has a good balance of scheduled activities and free time. One of the best ways to do this is to print out a schedule and to see and talk about what is happening daily. One family helped nine-year-old Keith conceptualize his routine by mapping it out for him on a weekly schedule. He saw that there was clearly room for soccer practice and games, piano lessons and practicing, and yet plenty of time for doing homework, visiting with friends, doing chores, caring for himself and free play. Eleven-year-old Lisa's weekly schedule looks different, reflecting her many interests in the arts and nature. Other parents might find it useful to complete a schedule for each child, to clarify when the planned activities occur, and when she had free time, time to play with friends, and time to read or do whatever she desired.

When parents are putting together the schedule for the entire family it is the time to make clear any rules for commitment, perseverance, and involvement. It seems reasonable to most families to expect a commitment for at least a year to activities that involve considerable expense or ones in which progress will undoubtedly be gradual. This is particularly true for music and dance lessons, where proficiency is acquired slowly.

In one family, before a child begins a sport, he or she has to go and watch other children playing it at least three times. Then the final decision is made. In still another family, a father has established these guidelines for his children's out-of-school activities. Each child chooses a musical instrument and makes a long-term commitment to it. Then each child chooses a sport, and,

KEITH			
	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Monday		Soccer practice 4:30 P.O. Field	practice piano $\frac{1}{2}$ hr.
Tuesday	SCHOOL	Homework 1 hr	piano $\frac{1}{2}$ hr
Wednesday		Play at home with sister 1 hour TV OK	piano $\frac{1}{2}$ hr 1 hour TV OK
Thursday		Homework 1 hr Play with Ben	piano $\frac{1}{2}$ hr
Friday		Free Time	piano $\frac{1}{2}$ hr
Saturday		9:30 Science Museum Discovery Class	Free Time
Sunday		practice piano $\frac{1}{2}$ hr.	Free time

Fall Schedule
for a
Nine-Year-Old

Spring Schedule
for an
Eleven-Year-Old

LISA			
	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Monday		Free time homework 1/2 hr	Set the table Free time
Tuesday	✓	3:00 art + Drawing Class	Play - Homework -
Wednesday	000	play outdoors Mural painting at Town Hall - stay until 7	
Thursday	040	Habitat Nature Study class 4:15	Choir practice 6:45
Friday	5	OK to invite someone to play a TV	set the table overnight camping this week
Saturday	Roller skate with Eddy if we are not camping	3 p.m. Book Making Illustrating Don't forget cement	Play 1/2 hr clean up your room
Sunday	Sunday school	Go for a ride to see deer and other animals	Set the table

depending on the choice, stays with it for two or more seasons. The father also encourages each child to choose one or two activities offered by the community center but only expects them to complete one semester. If they want more, they can take it. Whenever possible he prefers to have his children pursue only one activity at a time in addition to music. If their sport is a winter one, they choose a community center activity in the spring or fall. He has thought a lot about it and is determined that both his daughter and his son have a rich life and still not get so exhausted that they cannot do a good job. Other families have rules that no child can participate in three sports during a season, that no child can miss the family dinner more than once or twice a week, or that all out-of-school activities have to be within walking distance of either home or school.

Practice is a major problem for many families and people handle it in different ways. In some instances, an agreement is reached between the child and the teacher or coach. Many families have a rule about daily practice, and the time is set at about one-half hour per day, except on the day of the lesson. In other families, a child practices until a certain part of the weekly assignment has been mastered. Practicing is often much more palatable to children if they do it with another child or in a small group. This is especially true for a musical instrument, but certainly applies to *barre* practice, gymnastics, baton twirling, juggling, ball playing and many other skills. Finally, parents must realize that children need reminders and a little help in order to remember to practice or to stick with it.

Setting Up a Child's Calendar and Diary

Working with children on an oversized monthly calendar is a wonderful way to give them a clear picture of the organization of their own time. It helps the family to understand each person's daily routines, the rhythms of the whole week, and the continuing patterns that give shape to a month. Start with a new piece of heavy paper; mark in a grid as the background for each month. Children and parents can begin to fill in activities on the right days. It works well either to set up a separate calendar for each child in the family or to make a whole family calendar with everyone's activities recorded. A calendar can be a lively record of shifting and firm arrangements, frequently corrected or reconfirmed, sometimes recorded in different colors for different kinds of activities or in a different way for each person involved.

A working calendar, placed where everyone can read it and mark entries and corrections, allows the family to grasp what is going on at a glance. They can see where the tight scheduling will come, where the high points of the week may be, and where the trouble spots of boredom or rushed responsibilities are likely to happen. It helps both parents and children anticipate the exciting times and the potential problems. By referring to the plans on the calendar for each day, children will gain a sense of control over their own activities, responsibilities, and moods. Parents can review the next day's activities with children each evening, and remind them again the next morning of what the day will hold. Looking at the routine on the calendar gives children the security of seeing it written down, knowing they can check it again, and seeing how it fits into a whole week. Children learn amazingly quickly how a few cryptic words on the calendar ("recorder lesson, 4:30 pick-up") translate into the unfolding experience of a real afternoon.

One format for a working calendar places the monthly schedule in the middle of a bulletin board, where it is replaced

each month. Around the outside, the family can post various kinds of essential information. Some of this information is fairly permanent and fixed, such as emergency phone numbers, and can be tacked to the board and left there. Other kinds of information, like reading, chore, and idea lists, will need frequent updating, and can be changed as often as necessary. See next page for a sample calendar and bulletin board.



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Keeping a children's diary is an easy way to get a picture of how children's time is being used and how they feel about it. It is usually enough to keep this diary for two weeks at a time, three or four times a year. It will work better and be more fun if the child and one or two friends all keep diaries at the same time because children love to talk to each other and compare notes. Six- and seven-year-old children vary in their ability to remember what they did each day, but eight-year-olds can recall exactly what they did, especially if it is recorded that evening or early the next morning. Children are much more willing to keep a diary if parents are the recorders, especially if writing is not a favorite activity. The diary will provide many clues: maybe there are activities or people

MESSAGE CENTER

Car Pool

Molly's mother
to do car pool
today.

Gail will be here
when you get home

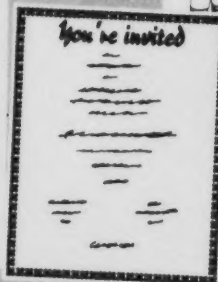
I'll be back from
class around 6:00.

Dad's working late
today. Mom

Reading ideas - new
Electric Company
magazine came in

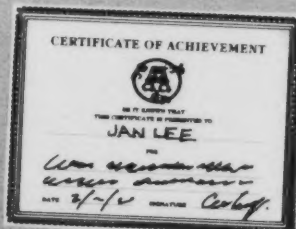
Monday -
Jason - Get to
baseball practice
on time! Better
practice pians before
you go

Jan - Pick up your
dolls & doll clothes
please - by 5:00
Today!



Hungry?
Make a Cheese Log.
Fill up pieces of cut
celery with cream
cheese or peanut
butter. Top with
raisers.

Plenty fruit juice
in the frig



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JANUARY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	Jason baseball practice 4:00 Gail to sit	J+J piano lesson	Jason baseball practice 4 Dad - dentist	5 p.m. go shopping for Marshall's present	Jason baseball practice 3:30	Jan 10 a.m. gymnastics Marshall's Party
8	Jason baseball practice 4:00 Gail to sit	J+J piano lesson	11	Jan - Myra to sleep over	13 ★ NO SCHOOL! Holidays	Jan gymnastics 10 a.m. Jason - 10 game
15	Gail to sit Jason - baseball practice 4:00	J+J piano lesson	18 ♥ Happy Birthday Dad ♥	19 Library	20	Jan gymnastics Jason game noon
22	Gail to sit Jason to sit baseball practice 4:00	J+J piano lesson	25	26 J+J hair cuts	27	28 Jan gymnastics 10 a.m.
29	Gail to sit Jason baseball practice 4:00	31 J+J piano lesson				

Regular Stuff

Homeworks!

Practice piano
1/2 hour

Feed hamster Jan

Feed Kitty - Jason

milk
carrots
green pepper
coriander
paper towels

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that your child really hates or loves. Patterns may emerge: you may discover that most of the child's activities are indoors, or that the child does little reading but lots of drawing, or that the child is happiest Wednesdays when she goes to the Community Center for woodworking. Keeping a diary may give the child or the parents new ideas, and may generate some interesting conversation, provided everyone refrains from getting defensive, critical, or outraged. A diary may also provide a record which can be fun and precious to read later, as it preserves the fresh sound of the child's voice at certain ages and offers a glimpse into daily life, with its passions and surprises.

Children are eager to share their happenings and love to talk about what went on during their day.

Conversation starters:

What did you do after school today?

What did you do over the weekend?

Who did it with you?

What was good about it?

What wasn't good about it?

Wednesday, Sept. 8

I got home around 3 and we ate Cookies and stuff. After I had a snack I put away my school papers and unpacked my school bag. Mom that school bus is just horrible. Do I have to take it tomorrow?

About 3:30 to 5 I played with Nell, Tobey + Sonya. We rode our bikes to the park. Then Tobey + Sonya had to go home to do homework.

5:00 until Dinner Nell + I came home and took the big box outside and we made a fantastic stable. I love being Camelot and Nell is always the elf. When we came

in I cleaned my ride ready for Saturday. Then ate Dinner.

After dinner I did "No Feet" Mom do you beautiful. Maybe we but Dad said only if most edition of our Before Bed - nothing my teeth and got a - Goodnight!

Thursday, Sept 8
Everybody was laughing late because he said Why? I don't see

A False Start is Not a Flop

As a parent, you are guiding a human life and your conscious efforts to make middle childhood count guarantees that those years will not be lost. Middle childhood is a time when parents still have a profound influence on the richness of their children's days, weeks, and years. Parents want to have competent, well-adjusted, curious children. The goal is not to turn children into super-achievers, but to help them feel capable, self-assured, and able to face the challenges that arise. When children develop self-confidence they feel great. Parents also feel better about themselves as these feelings are contagious. It is possible that these years may be parents' last opportunity, because in adolescence, the child's social world is primarily among peers. The rewards to parents of playing a strong role during their children's years from six to twelve are both immediate and long-term. There is the immediate pleasure of seeing children's pride in their own accomplishment, and the later reward of observing the continuing threads of achievement in their children's adolescence and adulthood.

But still, as dedicated as they may be, parents are absolutely sure to make some false starts, to set off down some dead-end streets. False starts are an inevitable part of helping children find what they want to do — an inevitable part of *trying*. To confirm this pattern, just ask yourself and a few other adults: "What did you do as a child that didn't work out? What was useless, a total waste of time, a flop?" Maybe it was those violin lessons or that choir practice. Maybe it was the swimming classes your parents paid for the summer that you thought the pool was too cold and had too much chlorine. Asking these questions will yield some wonderful, funny, and pathetic stories.

Annie, a nine-year-old, decided to play soccer, and she did it for two seasons. She would go to practice three times a week, but she did very little practicing there. She would play with the bugs she found in the grass, stand with her hands on her head, and often

spend time fixing her shoelaces in the middle of the field in the midst of practice or even a game. Annie's mother reported that the only time that Annie had contact with the ball was when it went directly to her, and even then she didn't really "play soccer." Yet, Annie continued to go to practice, and for two seasons each year, at that. Finally, after watching her at practice one day, Annie's mother said, "Annie, do you like to play soccer? Should you continue with it?" Annie replied, "Of course not — I don't like it, I just go. Forget it! Who would even want to play soccer? I don't know, not me!"

Michael, a man of thirty-two, commented, "Did I ever have some false starts! When I was about eight, I started to take piano lessons. I had no interest in the piano. From the piano, I went to the guitar, and that was even worse. Then I started the trumpet, and everyone in the family, including me, went crazy with the noises. Then the last instruments I tried were the drums and the flute, and that was it! In four years I guess I tried five instruments. My two sisters were musical, and I guess my mother thought that I should be, too. The entire experience was a waste. Actually, it is safe to say that my mother had little idea about what I was interested in doing. Today, we all laugh when our family gets together and talks about it."

Molly was an eight-year-old who loved art in school and always wanted to be taken to the art supply store or the recycling center to scrounge for materials. Reading the neighborhood newspaper, her father suddenly said, "Here is the perfect opportunity! Molly needs something to do on Wednesdays, and the community art center has a children's class which meets just after she gets home from school." So they signed her up for the fall "Collage Kite and Mask-Making Classes." She was excited and went eagerly to the first class, and she went to the second because they were going to make Japanese fish kites. The third Wednesday before school, Molly said, "By the way, I am not going to that stupid art class. I don't like the teacher, the kids, and the whole

thing. I'd rather sit in a chair at home and do nothing. I promise not to move until you get home." Her parents talked with her about returning, and there were several conversations on the topic over the week. On the next Wednesday she said, "I've decided I'll never go back — that's that!"

Don't be discouraged after reading these stories. Indeed, each of these people today have a number of intense and exciting interests. They were able to make choices because even after the false starts, the family accepted their decisions and permitted another choice. Although these particular experiences had little value in themselves, they were part of the process by which the children found what they really liked to do. False starts are pieces of the big puzzle of discovering identity, strengths, and independence. False starts help children discover who they are by helping them figure out what really excites or bores them. They are necessary detours on the way to finding the things children really love. Do not get bogged down or try to avoid every mistake. Proceed without feeling discouraged. Ask once again, "Well, what *are* you interested in doing?" Children will have answers.





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254 School's Out - Now What?

Reflections:

So What Does This All Mean to Our Family?

You have thought a great deal about your child and your child's choices regarding out-of-school time, and the ways that you can foster the *other 3 Rs*. What specifically have you found out? Have you and your child been able to actualize any of these discoveries? What is left unfinished, and where do you go from here?

This final section is designed to help you articulate what you have learned. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Some are difficult to answer, but they are all worth thinking about. Even partial answers will assist a parent in the planning process. These questions can help you reflect upon some of the adventures you have had, and on those yet to come.

How Do These Pieces Fit?

1. How much out-of-school time does my child have and what percentage of my child's waking day is it? (Consider time before school, after school, weekends, holidays and vacations.) Roughly how much of this time does my child spend alone, with other children and with adults? Is the balance of this time spent mostly in groups or in one-on-one interactions?

2. What is my general sense or feeling about my child's use of time — after school, weekends, and vacation? How does my child appear to feel about this time?

3. How do I feel about my child doing nothing? When does this happen and is it okay?

4. How often do I hear words like, "I'm bored," "This is boring," or "What should I do?" Do I actually feel responsible for this boredom? Is my typical response a directive, a list of options, a sign

of annoyance, or something else? Is this the most beneficial response to my child's lament?

5. Have I found a way to elicit new interests from my child without spoiling the fun of discovery for him/her?

6. What does my child consider to be really exciting, really fun, and really fabulous? What do I as a parent find to be really exciting, really fun, and really fabulous? How do we share these ideas?

7. Do we spend enough time on the things we really enjoy, or must we do things we are indifferent to most of the time? How much does my child enjoy the activities he/she is involved in? How much might he/she enjoy activities not presently in the repertoire? Can I think about a system to rectify any discrepancies in my child's and family's activities and endeavors?

8. What did I do as a child that made me the way I am today? What types of play and activities do I remember that relate to what I am doing today? What does my child do now in his/her play? What did I love to do that the family doesn't do now?

9. How do I show my child that I respect his/her free time? Simultaneously, how do I demonstrate to my child that I also value those specific interests and activities that he/she is creatively pursuing?

10. What is my child's rationale for a specific choice of activities? Does he/she like them? Do friends do them? Were they my favorite or my spouse's favorite activity? Do these activities make sense in my child's life as well as our family life?

11. Do I see any relationship between my child's out-of-school life and his/her school life? Are they two different worlds? Does my child need a separation from school and school-sponsored activities? Should I consider new ways to find appropriate resources for my child?

12. What is the decision-making process in our family? Do we allow a negotiation process in which my child and I can exchange ideas to arrive at a mutually agreeable solution? How much input do I allow my child regarding his/her own life?
13. How have I seen my child gain more independence? What did I do to facilitate this growth? Do I need to use any other resources to support my child's developing independence? What is the next step?
14. As a parent, how do I oversee what my child is doing? Do we have multiple systems of staying in touch? Do they work? Do we have all the appropriate back-up that we need?
15. What have been our most pressing problems over the past six months? How did we solve these problems and what influence did these solutions have in my child's life?
16. Are there times that I feel uneasy about my child's safety? Is there anything more we can do to improve the situation?
17. How often do we review our plans? Is it often enough?
18. Is my child doing things that help to make explicit the values I hold? Am I imparting a lifestyle I indeed value?
19. In what ways has this been a magical period of growth and how can it continue to be? Where do we go from here?

Chapter 6 Footnotes

1. Harvey Cushing, *The Life of Sir William Osler*, Vol. II. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1925, p. 185.
2. Eileen Keerdoja *et al.*, "Gold Medalists Still Skating Through Life," *Newsweek*, January 31, 1983, pp. 10, 12. *Newsweek*, Inc. All rights reserved, reprinted by permission.



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Appendix A

National Child-Serving Organizations

Academy of Model
Aeronautics (AMA)
815 15th St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20005

(Nat'l) All States Hobby Club
(NASHC)
Rt. 2, Box 159
Mountainburg, AR 72946

Amateur Athletic Union
of the United States (AAU)
3400 W. 86th St.
Indianapolis, IN 46268

Amateur Bicycle League
of America
c/o USOC
1750 E. Boulder St.
Colorado Springs, CO 80909

Amateur Softball Association
of America (ASA)
P.O. Box 11437
Oklahoma City, OK 73111

American Badminton
Association (USBA)
P.O. Box 237
Swartz Creek, MI 48473

American Checker Federation
(ACF)
3475 Belmont Ave.
Baton Rouge, LA 70808

American Junior Bowling
Congress (AJBC)
5301 S. 76th St.
Greendale, WI 53129

American National Red Cross
(ARC)
17th and D Sts., N.W.
Washington, DC 20006

American Numismatic
Association (ANA)
P.O. Box 2366
Colorado Springs, CO 80901

American Philatelic Society
(APS)
P.O. Box 800
State College, PA 16801

American Romanian
Orthodox Youth (AROY)
2522 Grey Tower Rd.
Jackson, MI 49201

American Water Ski
Association (AWSA)
S.R. 550 and Carl Floyd Rd.
Winter Haven, FL 33880

American Youth Hostels
(AYH)
National Campus
Delaplane, VA 22025

Appalachian Mountain Club
(AMC)
Five Joy St.
Boston, MA 02108

Bible Memory Association,
International (BMA)
1298 Pennsylvania
St. Louis, MO 63130

Boy Scouts of America
and Cub Scouts
North Brunswick, NJ 08902

Boys' Clubs of America (BCA)
771 First Ave.
New York, NY 10017

Camp Fire, Inc. (CFI)
4601 Madison Ave.
Kansas City, MO 64112

Children of the Confederacy
328 North Blvd.
Richmond, VA 23220

Christian Service Brigade
Box 150
Wheaton, IL 60187

Cooperative International
Pupil-To-Pupil Program
3229 Chestnut St., N.E.
Washington, DC 20018

4-H Program
Extension Service
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture
Washington, DC 20250

Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.
and Brownies (GS)
830 Third Ave.
New York, NY 10022

Girls' Clubs of America
(GCA)
133 E. 62nd St.
New York, NY 10021

International Friendship
League (IFL)
40 Mt. Vernon St.
Boston, MA 02108

International Kitefliers'
Association (AKA)
6636 Kirley Ave.
McLean, VA 22101

Junior Catholic Daughters
of America (JCDA)
Ten W. 71st St., Ste. 401
New York, NY 10023

Junior Philatelic Society
of America (JPA)
Box 383
Boonville, NY 13309

League of Friendship
P.O. Box 509
Mt. Vernon, OH 43050

Little League Baseball
Williamsport, PA 17701

National Association of
Girls' Clubs (NACGC)
5808 16th St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20011

National Association
of Rocketry (NAR)
182 Madison Dr.
Elizabeth, PA 15037

National Audubon Society
(NAS)
950 Third Ave.
New York, NY 10022

National Campers & Hikers
Association (NCHA)
7172 Transit Rd.
Buffalo, NY 14221

National Federation
of Music Clubs (NFMC)
1336 N. Delaware St.
Indianapolis, IN 46202

National Field Archery
Association (NFAA)
Rt. 2, Box 514
Redlands, CA 92373

National Little Britches
Rodeo Association (NLBRA)
2160 S. Holly, No. 105
Denver, CO 80222

National Music Camp (NMC)
Interlochen, MI 49643

Pony Baseball
P.O. Box 225
Washington, PA 15301

Pony of the Americas Club
(POAC)
P.O. Box 1447
Mason City, IA 50401

Pop Warner Junior League
Football
1315 Walnut St., Ste. 606
Philadelphia, PA 19107

(Cooperative International)
Pupil-To-Pupil Program
(CIPTPP)
3229 Chestnut St., N.E.
Washington, DC 20018

Puppeteers of America
Box 1061
Ojai, CA 93023

Ranger Rick's Nature Club
(RRNC)
1412 16th St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

Schoolboy Rowing Association
of America (SRAA)
Four E. River Dr.
Fairmount Park
Philadelphia, PA 19130

Science Clubs of America —
Inactive
Council of Scientific Society
Presidents (CSSP)
1155 16th St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

Sierra Club (SC)
530 Bush St.
San Francisco, CA 94108

Student Letter Exchange
RFD No. 4
Waseca, MN 56093

United States Chess
Federation (USCF)
186 Rt. 9W
New Windson, NY 12550

United States Field Hockey
Association (USFHA)
P.O. Box 4016
Lynchburg, VA 24502

United States Figure Skating
Association (USFA)
20 First St.
Colorado Springs, CO 80906

United States Pony Clubs
(USPC)
303 S. High St.
West Chester, PA 19380

United States Table Tennis
Association (USTTA)
Olympic House
1750 E. Boulder St.
Colorado Springs, CO 80909

United States Tennis
Association (USTA)
51 E. 42nd St.
New York, NY 10017

The Wilderness Society
1901 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20006

Woodmen Rangers
and Rangerettes
Woodmen Tower
Omaha, NE 68102

Young Men's Christian
Association
291 Broadway
New York, NY 10007

Young Musician's Foundation
194 S. Robertson Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90035

Young Women's Christian
Association
600 Lexington Ave.
New York, NY 10022

Appendix B

Reference Books for Identifying Child-Serving Organizations

After-School and Weekend Opportunities for Gifted and Talented Students 1982-1983. Massachusetts Department of Education, Office for Gifted and Talented, 1385 Hancock St., Quincy, MA 02169.

This is a directory of after-school and weekend programs for children in the State of Massachusetts. Current offerings are listed by town or city. Curriculum areas covered are Computer, Cultural/History, Dance/Movement, Enrichment, Fine Arts/Crafts, Language Arts, Mathematics, Music, Natural Science, Other Sciences, Theatre Arts, and Town Expeditions. With each listing, information is given as to the contact person, the age group, the type of instruction offered, the cost, and any other special information. (An excellent resource. Check and see — it is possible that your state's department of education also has such a resource.)

Akey, Denise S., Ed., *Encyclopedia of Associations*. 15th ed. Vol. 1 — National Organizations of the United States. Detroit, MI: Gale Research Co., 1981.

This book provides an extensive listing of national organizations. Categories include: trade, business and commercial; agricultural and commodity; legal, governmental public administration and military; scientific, engineering and technical; educational; cultural/social welfare; health and medical; public affairs; fra-

ternal, foreign interest, nationality and ethnic; religious; veteran, hereditary and patriotic; hobby and avocational; athletic and sports; labor unions, associations and federations; Chambers of Commerce; and Greek letter and related organizations. The cultural/social welfare, hobby and avocational, and athletic and sports categories are helpful when reviewing possible organizations for a child to join in a given activity.

Bacchus, Joan and Hurst, Marsha. *Afterschool*. New York, NY: The Resourceful Family, 1983.

This book is a first of its kind and a valuable resource to parents and teachers in the New York City area. The book briefly describes the need for child care after school hours, and the need for assessing the quality of these programs. An extensive list of programs in New York City provides information, including hours, enrollment and eligibility requirements, activities, fees, and transportation needs. Two indexes identify programs by major activity and by zip code for easy community access. The format used in this book is an excellent example for other communities to follow in setting up their own after-school directories.

Emmens, Carol A., Ed. *Children's Media Market Place*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: Neal-Shuman Publishers, Inc., 1982.

This book provides information, including purposes and services, of children's media sources. Some directly serve children; others help parents and people who work with children. Categories include: publishers, audiovisual producers and distributors, periodicals for children, periodicals for professionals and parents, review journals and services, wholesalers, juvenile bookstores, juvenile book clubs, agents, children's television program sources, television stations, program distributors, children's radio programs, organizations, public library coordinators, state school media officers, examination centers, federal grants for children's programs, calendar of events and conferences and awards for children's media.

Kujoth, Jean S. *The Boys' and Girls' Book of Clubs and Organizations*. Englewood Cliff, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975.

This book provides addresses, contact people, and other information on national organizations for children ages seven to fourteen to participate in or join. Categories are as follows: large organizations, collecting organizations, sports, natural resources, correspondence, performing arts, animal care and training, and science-oriented organizations.

Youth Serving Organizations Directory. Detroit, MI: Gale Research Company, 1978.

This book is an annotated version of the *Encyclopedia of Associations*. It includes all organizations directly or indirectly concerned with older children and young adults. The directory alphabetically lists organizations, their addresses, telephone numbers, and purpose, enabling easy access for those interested in all aspects of youth development. Categories are as follows: organizations young people belong to, organizations directly involved in teaching or administering to young people, organizations indirectly involved in teaching or administering, and large organizations which have youth services within their structures.

Appendix C

Computers and Children

Books

Bear, John. *Computer Wimp*. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 1983.

Both a philosophical and practical guide to assist one in purchasing a computer. Topics such as warranty, repairs, buying by mail, ways to talk to computer people, computer fear, and others are covered in a sensible but amusing way. It is a must-read before one starts to shop.

Brenner, Barbara and Endreweit, Mari E. *The Bank Street Family Guide to Computers*. New York, NY: Ballentine Books, 1984.

The Bank Street College of Education Center for Children and Technology is involved in many exciting projects. The book reflects the authors' understandings of computers, psychology, and education.

Coburn, Peter; Kelman, Peter; Roberts, Nancy; Snyder, Thomas F.E.; Watt, Daniel H.; and Weiner, Cheryl. *Practical Guide to Computers in Education*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1982.

This is the first book in a series of guides on computers and their use in the educational curricula. It introduces the beginner to the workings of the computer as well as to its application in the classroom. The book offers not only a thorough list of computer resources, but also comparison charts of various computer systems.

Papert, Seymour. *Mindstorms*. New York, NY: Basic Books, Inc., 1980 (paperback also available).

Papert believes that the computer is a powerful tool for children to learn with and to use. The philosophy of the LOGO Programming Language is explained as well as the reasons it is of value to children. Papert has a vision of children programming the computer, mastering a powerful technology, and understanding important science, mathematics, and model-making concepts. Parents must read it!

Watt, Daniel. *Learning With Logo*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1983.

This is an easy-to-read manual on learning how to use LOGO. It is comprehensible to a ten-year-old as well as to an adult. Throughout the book, activities and illustrations help one learn to use LOGO in an exciting and fun way.

Magazines

Apple Education News

An Information Service for Educators and Trainers

20525 Mariani Ave.

M/S 18C

Cupertino, CA 95014

Ed. Lola Gerstenberger

This newsletter is a quarterly publication of Apple Computer, Inc. Much information is given regarding special state and local programs and projects, computer and software camps, and special "Microfests." It provides information that parents could find relevant in their community. For a courtesy subscription, send name and mailing address to the above address.

Classroom Computer Learning
Subscription Department
5615 W. Cermak Rd.
Cicero, IL 60650

This magazine focuses on the use of computers in schools. Regular features of the magazine include a sounding board for teachers, answers to technical questions, reviews of new products, and a listing of upcoming conferences and computer shows. Issues cover a variety of topics, from the controversies of having computers in schools to practical suggestions for computer activities in classrooms for all ages. This example is *one of many magazines* on the market today. Published nine times a year by Pitman Learning, Inc.; a year's subscription is \$19.95.

*Classroom Computer Learning Directory
of Educational Computing Resources*
Classroom Computer Learning
5615 W. Carmel Rd.
Cicero, IL 60650

Part A: This is a current index on computers and information for educators using computers published in conjunction with CCL. The directory is divided into seven annotated parts: Software Resources; Hardware Resources; Information Sources for Adults; Educational Computing Organizations; Funding; Continuing Education; and 1983-84 Conference and Convention Calendar. It is a most comprehensive and up-to-date resource and is published yearly.

Part B: The Directory of Education Software is a complement to the above directory. The listings are by subject matter, such as reading, social studies, etc.

Electronic Learning
Scholastic, Inc.
730 Broadway
New York, NY 10003

This magazine features articles on computer hardware and software and on using computers in education. Computers and education is the focus. Reviews and analysis of the variety of available computerware assists with comparisons of products. The magazine has many advertisements of computers, peripherals, systems, and courses in computer learning. Published during the school year; 8 issues for \$19.

inCider
Wayne Green, Inc.
80 Pine St.
Peterborough, NH 03458

This magazine provides the reader with a great deal of information on computers. There are reviews of both hardware and software, general articles regarding computers, specific computer functions, and programs and games for adults and children. It is designed for those who own or are considering purchase of an Apple computer. Each publication appears to have a great deal of information on children and computers. It is published 12 times per year; the year's subscription is \$25.

Parents' Choice
P.O. Box 185
Waban, MA 02168

This group provides a review of children's media. In most issues, computer software for children is reviewed and recommended.

Window

Window, Inc.

824 Boylston St.

Chestnut Hill, MA 02167

This magazine arrives five times a year on floppy diskette. In addition to providing information on available systems, there are instructions on writing one's own programs, as well as practice programs. Reviews and previews of existing games are a feature, and periodically a game will be included in the magazine. This magazine provides an informative and practical experience for children and parents. Five issues a year for \$95.

Organizations

Apple Computer Clubs

P.O. Box 948

Lowell, MA 01853

A resource for groups of school-age children who are interested in creating a club. A start-up kit is available, which includes a manual on how to organize the club, an activity brochure, and posters. Children can organize a club at school or at a local community group such as a "Y."

Young People's Logo Association

P.O. Box 855067

Richardson, TX 75085

This association publishes *Turtle News*, which contains information about LOGO and BASIC. The association sponsors special activities and provides information on Turtle Learning Centers and where they are located.

Appendix D

Books and Children

Part 1: Books and Magazines for Children

Books

The books listed here were recommended by children, parents, and librarians, but the list is by no means definitive. It is representative of some of the best that is available and is meant only to serve as a starting point. Many of these books are available in editions other than the one listed.

To help you locate books that are of particular interest to your child, the bibliography has been broken up into the following categories:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Activities for Children and Parents | 11. First Readers (Easy-to-read Books) |
| 2. Almanacs | 12. Free or Inexpensive Items |
| 3. Animal Stories | 13. Hobbies |
| 4. Anthologies of Poetry | 14. Humor and Fantasy |
| 5. Anthologies of Stories | 15. Music |
| 6. Biographies and Autobiographies | 16. Mysteries |
| 7. Classics | 17. Nature and Science |
| 8. Cookbooks | 18. Personal Growth and Self-Help |
| 9. Dictionaries | 19. Sports |
| 10. Fairy Tales and Folk Tales | 20. Travel |

ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN AND PARENTS

Blake, Jim and Ernst, Barbara. *The Great Perpetual Learning Machine: A Stupendous Collection of Ideas, Games, Experiments, Activities, & Recommendations for Further Exploration — with Tons of Illustrations.* Boston, MA: Little Brown & Co., 1976.

Blau, Rosalie. *Activities for School-Age Child Care.* Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1977.

Braga, Joseph and Braga, Laurie. *Children and Adults: Activities for Growing Together.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1976.

Caney, Steven. *Steven Caney's Invention Book.* New York, NY: Workman Publishing Co., Inc., 1983. +

——— *Steven Caney's Playbook.* New York, NY: Workman Publishing Co., Inc., 1975. +

——— *Steven Caney's Toybook.* New York, NY: Workman Publishing Co., Inc., 1972. +

Cole, Ann. *I Saw a Purple Cow & 100 Other Recipes for Learning.* Boston, MA: Little, Brown & Co., 1972. +

Gregg, Elizabeth and Boston Children's Medical Center Staff. *What to Do When There's Nothing to Do.* New York, NY: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1970.

Haas, Carolyn, et al. *Backyard Vacation: Outdoor Fun in Your Own Neighborhood.* Boston, MA: Little, Brown & Co., 1980.

Haas, Carolyn. *The Big Book of Recipes for Fun: Creative Learning for Home and School.* Chicago, IL: Chicago Review Press, Inc., 1980.

Johnson, June. *Eight Hundred Thirty-Eight Ways to Amuse a Child.* New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1962.

+ indicates author has written other children's books

Lorton, Mary. *Workjobs for Parents*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., Inc., 1975.

Marks, Burton, and Marks, Rita. *Kites for Kids*. New York, NY: Lothrop & Shepard Books, 1980. +

Marzollo, Jean, and Lloyd, Janice. *Learning Through Play*. New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1972. +

McToots, Rudi, & Dreadnaught Group. *The Kids Book of Games for Cars, Trains and Planes*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, Inc., 1980.

Raskin, Bruce (Ed.) *The Whole Learning Catalog*. Belmont, CA: Pitman Learning, Inc., 1976.

Scharlatt, Elizabeth L. *Kids: Day In and Day Out*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1979.

Wurman, Richard S. *The Yellow Pages of Learning Resources*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1972.

ALMANAC

Elwood, Ann, et al. *Macmillan Illustrated Almanac for Kids*. New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1981.

Hammond Almanac: The One Volume Encyclopedia of a Million Facts & Records, 1983. New York, NY: New American Library, 1983.

Klima, Pappy. *Anything You Might Ask Almanac*. New York, NY: Platt & Munk Publishers, 1976.

McLoone-Basta, Margo, and Siegel, Alice. *The Kids' Book of Lists*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1980.

McWhirter, Norris. *Guinness Book of World Records*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, Inc., 1983. +

+ indicates author has written other children's books

McWhirter, Norris, and McWhirter, Ross. *Guinness Book of Astounding Feats & Events*. New York, NY: Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 1975. +

Newspaper Enterprise Associates Inc. *World Almanac and Book of Facts* 1983. New York, NY: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1983.

Sobol, Donald J. *Encyclopedia Brown's Record Book of Weird and Wonderful Facts*. New York, NY: Delacorte Press, 1979. +

——— *Encyclopedia Brown's Second Record Book of Weird and Wonderful Facts*. New York, NY: Delacorte Press, 1981. +

Tremain, Ruthven. *The Animals' Who's Who*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1982.

ANIMAL STORIES

Adams, Richard. *Watership Down*. New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1974.

Armstrong, William Howard. *Sounder*. New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1969. +

Atwater, Florence Hasseltine and Tupper, Richard. *Mr. Popper's Penguins*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown & Co., 1938. +

Berends, Polly Berrien. *The Case of the Elevator Duck*. New York, NY: Random House, 1973. +

Bond, Michael. *The Tales of Olga da Polga*. New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1971. + *

Brooks, Walter Rollin. *Freddy the Detective*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1932.

Butterworth, Oliver. *The Enormous Egg*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown & Co., 1956. +

+ indicates author has written other children's books

* indicates book is part of a series

Cleary, Beverly. *The Mouse and the Motorcycle*. New York, NY: William Morrow & Co., Inc., 1965. +*

Dahl, Roald. *Fantastic Mr. Fox*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970. +

Farley, Walter. *The Black Stallion*. New York, NY: Random House, Inc., 1944. +*

Hooks, William. *The Seventeen Gerbils of Class 4-A*. New York, NY: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, Inc., 1976. +

Lofting, Hugh. *Story of Doctor Dolittle*. New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1920. +*

London, Jack. *Call of the Wild*. New York, NY: Airmont Publishing Co., Inc., 1964. +

Peet, Bill. *Capyboppy*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1966. +

Selden, George. *Cricket in Times Square*. New York, NY: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1970. +

——— *Tucker's Countryside*. New York, NY: Avon Books, 1972. +

Sharp, Margery. *Miss Bianca*. New York, NY: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1974. +*

——— *The Rescuers*. New York, NY: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1959. +*

White, E.B. *Charlotte's Web*. New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1952. +

——— *Stuart Little*. New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1945. +

+ indicates author has written other children's books

* indicates book is part of a series

ANTHOLOGIES OF POETRY

Ciardi, John. *I Met A Man*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961. +

Dickinson, Emily. *I'm Nobody! Who Are You? Poems of Emily Dickinson for Children*. Owing Mills, MD: Stemmer House Publishers, Inc., 1978. +

Dunning, Stephen, et al. *Reflections on a Gift of Watermelon Pickle & Other Modern Verse*. New York, NY: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 1966. +

Ferris, Helen. *Favorite Poems Old and New*. New York, NY: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1957.

Larrick, Nancy. *Crazy to be Alive in Such a Strange World: Poems About People Selected by Nancy Larrick*. New York, NY: M. Evans & Co., Inc., 1977. +

Lear, Edward. *A Book of Nonsense*. New York, NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1980. +

Lee, Dennis. *Alligator Pie*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1975. +

Livingstone, Myra C. *A Circle of Seasons*. New York, NY: Holiday House, Inc., 1982.

McCord, David. *One at a Time*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown & Co., 1977. +

Ness, Evaline. *Amelia Mixed the Mustard and Other Poems*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975. +

O'Neill, Mary. *Hailstones and Halibut Bones*. New York, NY: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1961. +

Prelutsky, Jack. *The Queen of Eene*. New York, NY: Greenwillow Books, 1978. +

Silverstein, Shel. *Where the Sidewalk Ends: Poems and Drawings*. New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1974. +

+ indicates author has written other children's books

* indicates book is part of a series

——— *A Light in the Attic*. New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1981. +

St. Vincent Millay, Edna. *Edna St. Vincent Millay's Poems Selected for Young People*. New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1979.

Stevenson, Robert L. *A Child's Garden of Verses*. New York, NY: Airmont Publishing Co., Inc., 1969. +

Untermeyer, Louis and Untermeyer, Bryna (Eds.). *The Golden Treasury of Poetry*. New York, NY: Western Publishing Co., Inc., 1966.

Yolen, Jane. *The Dream Weaver*. New York, NY: Putnam Publishing Group, 1979. +

ANTHOLOGIES OF STORIES

Association for Childhood Education International. *And Everywhere, Children!* New York, NY: Greenwillow Books, 1979.

Lester, Julius. *The Knee-High Man and Other Tales*. New York, NY: Dial Press, 1972. +

Martignoni, Margaret E. *Illustrated Treasury of Children's Literature*. New York, NY: Grosset & Dunlap, 1955.

Morton, Miriam (Ed.). *A Harvest of Russian Children's Literature*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1967.

Tudor, Tasha. *A Tasha Tudor's Sampler: A Tale for Easter Pumpkin Moonshine the Dolls' Christmas*. New York, NY: David McKay Co., Inc., 1977. +

Untermeyer, Louis and Untermeyer, Bryna (Eds.). *The Golden Treasury of Children's Literature*. New York, NY: Western Publishing Co., Inc., 1966. +

BIOGRAPHIES AND AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

Bigland, Eileen. *Helen Keller*. New York, NY: S.G. Phillips, Inc., 1967.

+ indicates author has written other children's books

* indicates book is part of a series

DeKay, James T. *Meet Martin Luther King, Jr.* New York, NY: Random House, Inc., 1969.

Frank, Anne. *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl.* New York, NY: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1967.

Frisbee, Lucy P. *John F. Kennedy: America's Youngest President.* New York, NY: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1983.

Fritz, Jean. *And Then What Happened, Paul Revere?* New York, NY: Putnam Publishing Group, 1982. +

——— *What's The Big Idea, Ben Franklin?* New York, NY: Putnam Publishing Group, 1982. +

——— *Where Do You Think You're Going, Christopher Columbus?* New York, NY: Putnam Publishing Group, 1980. +

——— *Where Was Patrick Henry on the Twenty-Ninth Day of May?* New York, NY: Putnam Publishing Group, 1975. +

——— *Why Don't You Get a Horse, Sam Adams?* New York, NY: Putnam Publishing Group, 1974. +

Graff, Steward and Polly A. *Helen Keller: Toward the Light.* Easton, MD: Garrard Publishing Co., 1965. +

Malone, Mary. *Milton Hershey: Chocolate King.* Easton, MD: Garrard Publishing Co., 1965. +

Millender, Dharathula H. *Crispus Attucks: Black Leader of Colonial Patriots.* New York, NY: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1983. +

——— *Martin Luther King, Jr.* New York, NY: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc. +

Montgomery, Herbert. *Johnny Appleseed.* Minneapolis, MN: Winston Press, Inc., 1979.

Parks, Aileen W. *Davy Crockett.* New York, NY: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc.

+ indicates author has written other children's books

* indicates book is part of a series

Parin, John. *Amelia Earhart*. New York, NY: Dell Publishing Co., Inc.

Stevenson, Augusta. *Clara Barton: Founder of the American Red Cross*. New York, NY: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1983. +

——— *Abraham Lincoln: The Great Emancipator*. New York, NY: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1983. +

——— *Molly Pitcher*. New York, NY: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc. +

Tobias, Tobi. *Maria Tallchief*. New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1972. +

Van Riper, Guernsey, Jr. *Lou Gehrig: One of Baseball's Greatest*. New York, NY: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1982. +

——— *Knute Rockne: Young Athlete*. New York, NY: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1983. +

——— *Jim Thorpe: Olympic Champion*. New York, NY: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc. +

Wagoner, Jean B. *Martha Washington: America's First, First Lady*. New York, NY: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1983.

Weil, Ann. *Betsy Ross: Designer of Our Flag*. New York, NY: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc.

White, Florence M. *Escape: The Life of Harry Houdini*. New York, NY: Jullian Messner, 1979. +

CLASSICS

Alcott, Louisa M. *Little Women*. New York, NY: Ace Books, 1978. +

Barrie, James M. *Peter Pan*. New York, NY: Ace Books, 1979. +

Baum, L. Frank. *The Wizard of Oz*. New York, NY: Ace Books, 1980. +

Carroll, Lewis. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Closter, NJ: Sharon Publications, Inc., 1981. +

+ indicates author has written other children's books

* indicates book is part of a series

Carroll, Lewis. *Through the Looking Glass*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1977. +

Defoe, Daniel. *Robinson Crusoe*. New York, NY: Airmont Publishing Co., Inc., 1964. +

Dickens, Charles. *Oliver Twist*. New York, NY: Airmont Publishing Co., Inc., 1964. +

Estes, Eleanor. *The Hundred Dresses*. New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1974. + *

Estes, Eleanor. *Moffats*. New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1968. + *

Forbes, Esther. *Johnny Tremain*. New York, NY: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1969. +

Grahame, Kenneth. *The Wind in the Willows*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, Inc., 1982. +

Hale, Lucretia P. *Complete Peterkin Papers*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1960. +

Kipling, Rudyard. *The Jungle Book*. New York, NY: Ace Books, 1980. +

London, Jack. *White Fang*. New York, NY: Airmont Publishing Co., Inc., 1964. +

McClosky, Robert. *Homer Price*. New York, NY: Penguin Books, Inc., 1976. + *

Milne, A.A. *Winnie-the-Pooh*. New York, NY: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1970. + *

Morey, Walt. *Gentle Ben*. New York, NY: Avon Books, 1976.

Nesbit, Edith. *Five Children and It*. New York, NY: Penguin Books, Inc., 1959. +

+ indicates author has written other children's books

* indicates book is part of a series

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TRAVEL

Chesler, Bernice. *In and Out of Boston with (or without) Children*. Fourth Edition. Chester, CT: The Globe Pequot Press, 1983. +

Cole, Ann, et al. *Children Are Children Are Children: An Activity Approach to Exploring Brazil, France, Iran, Japan, Nigeria, & the U.S.S.R.* Boston, MA: Little, Brown & Co., 1978. +

Epstein, Beryl and Epstein, Samuel. *Washington, D.C.* New York, NY: Franklin Watts, Inc., 1981. +

Fradin, Dennis. *New York: In Words & Pictures*. Chicago, IL: Childrens Press, 1981. +

+ indicates author has written other children's books

O'Shea, Mary J. *Chicago*. Mankato, MN: Creative Education, Inc., 1975. +

Seablom, Seth H. *California Coloring Guide*. Seattle, WA: Seablom Design, 1979. +

Vanderwarker, Peter. *Boston Then & Now: Sixty-Five Boston Sites Photographed in the Past & Present*. New York, NY: Dover Publications, Inc.

Magazines

Bananas
Scholastic Inc.
730 Broadway
New York, NY 10003

Boys' Life
Boy Scouts of America
1325 Walnut Hill Ln.
Irving, TX 75062

Cobblestone: The History Magazine for Young People
Cobblestone Publishing
28 Main St.
Peterborough, NH 03458

3-2-1 Contact
Children's Television Workshop
1 Lincoln Plz.
New York, NY 10023

Cricket: The Magazine for Children
Open Court Publishing Company
Box 100
La Salle, IL 61301

The Curious Naturalist
Massachusetts Audubon Society
S. Great Rd.
Lincoln, MA 01773

Dynamite
Scholastic Inc.
730 Broadway
New York, NY 10003

Ebony Jr!
Johnson Publishing Co., Inc.
820 S. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, IL 60605

Electric Company Magazine
Children's Television Workshop
1 Lincoln Plz.
New York, NY 10023

Enter
Children's Television Workshop
1 Lincoln Plz.
New York, NY 10023

Highlights for Children

Highlights for Children, Inc.
2300 W. Fifth Ave.
P.O. Box 269
Columbus, OH 43216

Muppet Magazine

Telepictures Publications, Inc.
475 Park Ave. S.
New York, NY 10016

National Geographic World

National Geographic Society
17th and M Sts., N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

*Odyssey — Young People's Magazine
of Astronomy and Outer Space*

Astromedia Corp.
625 E. St. Paul Ave.
Box 92788
Milwaukee, WI 53202

*Penny Power: A Consumer Reports
Publication for Young People*

Consumers Union of U.S., Inc.
256 Washington St.
Mount Vernon, NY 10550

Ranger Rick's Nature Magazine

National Wildlife Federation, Inc.
1412 16th St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

Sports Illustrated

Time, Inc.
Time and Life Building
New York, NY 10020

Stone Soup

Children's Art Foundation
Box 83
Santa Cruz, CA 95063

WOW

Scholastic, Inc.
730 Broadway
New York, NY 10003

Zoobooks

Wildlife Education, Ltd.
930 W. Washington, Ste. 14
San Diego, CA 92103

Part 2: References for Selecting Appropriate Literature

Appendix D Books and Children

Baskin, Barbara H. and Harris, Karen H. *Books for the Gifted Child*. New York, NY: R.R. Bowker Co., 1980.

This is an annotated collection of books to cognitively challenge the child from preschool to early adolescent years. This is a collection of contemporary books for the gifted child, including a historical and social look at this special child. Books are arranged alphabetically by author with notations as to the level of reading skills required — beginning, intermediate, and advanced. Title index and subject index are included for easy reference.

Chall, Jeanne S. *Stages of Reading Development*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1983.

This important book is based on the premise that reading is the most important skill in our society. The hypothesis is that there is a theoretical construct for the successive stages of reading; the reading process itself changes. The methods to learn reading skills must accompany these developmental changes. A model for teaching reading based on the stage scheme is presented and evaluated.

Children's Classics: A List for Parents. Boston, MA: The Horn Book, Inc., 1982.

This is an annotated list of classical literature for children, including both historical and contemporary classics. Books are listed alphabetically by title and state a clue to the message or plot of the story. Various published editions are listed under each title, including illustrator, publisher, and publication date. The list is available from The Horn Book, Inc., 31 St. James Ave., Boston, MA, for \$2.00.

Contemporary Classics. Boston, MA: The Horn Book, Inc., 1982.

This list of 30 classics published within the last 15 years omits the more famous classics in favor of less familiar titles. This annotated list is limited to stories of fantasy and humor, realistic stories, and historical novels.

Gillespie, John T. and Gilbert, Christine B. (Ed.). *Best Books for Children*. New York, NY: R.R. Bowker Company, 1981.

This annotated collection of books is appropriate for preschoolers to sixth graders. All recommended books are still in print, despite an age of 70+ years for some of them. Books are arranged alphabetically by author's last name under subject categories. An additional four indexes list the books by author/illustrator, title, biographical subject, and general subject matter.

Guidelines for Selecting Bias-Free Textbooks and Storybooks. New York, NY: The Council on Interracial Books for Children.

This superb guide presents the many biases that are still pervasive in stories' texts and illustrations. The guide demonstrates that there is more to bias than mere sexist or racist stereotyping. Generations and lifestyles are often stereotyped in both visual and descriptive terms. Recommendations for aspects to be aware of are listed throughout the book. Questions are provided to assist in determining bias-free books. Photographs of media material that are biased and unbiased fill the margins, providing the reader with examples and standards.

Larrick, Nancy. *A Parent's Guide to Children's Reading*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1975.

This book is about children, language, reading, and the parents' role in facilitating this interchange. Advice is given on helping your child increase his/her vocabulary: a list of books and other media material appropriate for children is provided. One section describes the variety of ways reading is taught to children in school; the role of parents is stressed throughout this book.

Sutherland, Zena. *The Best in Children's Books*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1980.

There are two books in this series — one covering books published between 1966 and 1972 and the other addressing books from 1973 to 1978. This series is unique in that, in addition to annotating 1400 books and providing a list of publishers' addresses, there are six indexes to help use this guide. Books in the main text are listed alphabetically by author. The Title Index helps locate a book alphabetically by title. The Developmental Values Index groups books by elements appropriate to developmental stages, e.g., sharing or trust. Suggestions in the Curricular Use Index supplement planned school curricula, while the Reading Level Index separates books by grade level reading ability, beginning with pre-kindergarten. Both relevant fiction and nonfiction stories appear in the Subject Index, and the Type of Literature Index cites all books in a category, e.g., ghost stories or poetry.

Trelease, Jim. *The Read-Aloud Handbook*. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1982.

Unlike most books stressing ways to help your child *learn* to read, this book helps the parents teach their child to *want* to read. The first part of the book suggests the value of reading to children of all ages, at home and at school. The last chapter is an annotated treasury of 900 books to read aloud, ranging from picture books to poetry and from wordless books to novels. Also available is a film, "Turning On the Turned-Off Reader," which highlights this technique.

Part 3: Special Resources

Center for Early Adolescence
Suite 223, Carr Mill Mall
Carrboro, NC 27510

Center for Early Adolescence is a national center that provides information, training, and resources for advocacy to professionals who work with 10- to 15-year-olds and their families. The Center has four major thrusts: advocacy, training, information, and publications. Write to the Center for information and a publication list. Some of the publications include: *Living with 10- to 15-year-olds*, *Risk Taking Behavior and Young Adolescents*, and *Understanding Early Adolescents: An Overview*. The Center also sponsors conferences on early adolescence for parents and professionals. Examples of conference topics are early adolescent development, educational needs of early adolescents, and adolescents in the home and the community. Send for information on the conference series and publications.

The Home and School Institute, Inc.
Special Projects Office
Suite 228
1201 16th St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

The Home and School Institute provides parents with ideas for helping their child learn at home. Projects include simple activities that can be incorporated into the day's routine. The Institute publishes several helpful books, such as *Families Learning Together*, *Survival Guide for Busy Parents*, and *101 Activities for Building More Effective School-Community Involvement*. The theory behind all these books is that the building of children's achievement begins at home. Write them for an updated list of publications and information on conferences.

Parents' Choice

P.O. Box 185

Waban, MA 02168

Parents' Choice is a newspaper review of children's media: books, television shows, movies, music, story records, toys, games, video discs, and computer software. As a public service they offer a book, *What Kids Who Don't Like to Read Like to Read*, covering the reading interests of children in kindergarten to junior high. In addition, they offer to parents a free list of computer software for children as well as a compilation of computer access centers for children's free use. Parents' Choice Foundation also sponsors a celebrity public service announcement series on television and radio to promote children's books and computer literacy. The newspaper is published four times a year and is available at a subscription rate of \$10; a two-year subscription is \$15.

Appendix E

Books about Television and Children

Brown, Ray (Ed.). *Children and Television*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 1976.

This book is a collection of research papers and review articles spanning a variety of topics related to children and television. The focus is on the process of the relationship evolving between television and its young audience. The book is divided into three parts, each examining a different aspect of this process. Part I assesses the amount of television children watch. Part II examines the family's influence and the child's own expectations of watching television. Part III reviews the literature on the effects on children of what they are exposed to on TV.

Charren, Peggy and Sandler, Martin W. *Changing Channels: Living (Sensibly) with Television*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1983.

Very few books on television present a fair view of this medium; television is either a wonderful invention or the most destructive force in modern society. *Changing Channels*, instead, presents a balanced account of television's impact and its value. Statistics of what television costs the consumer and the producer are provided. In addition, practical suggestions include how to control and monitor family TV viewing and how the consumer can work to change TV. Each chapter concludes with a list of references of books, periodicals, films and tapes, and organizations to contact.

DeFranco, Ellen B. *TV On/Off*. Santa Monica, CA: Goodyear Publishing Company, Inc., 1980.

This book is a practical guide to television watching and nonwatching. It presents a full range of suggestions for changing family viewing habits. Each chapter contains projects and activities for critical analysis of television programming, as well as suggestions for creating activities and interesting replacements for TV viewing. This guide does not threaten but presents the facts of television's control and the ways a family can use television to their benefit. This book respects children while maintaining that parents must remain in control. For this reason, all suggestions are preceded by awareness activities to help the parent understand the child and develop better attitudes toward positive TV use.

Howe, Michael J.A. *Television and Children*. London, England: New University Education, 1977.

Written by a man professing to enjoy watching television, this book contains interesting aspects of children's television viewing habits. The focus is television's influence on children. It is made clear that not everything seen can be comprehended; therefore, children assimilate messages on television at their own level of understanding. The effects of violence on television and the use of television as a learning process are also discussed.

Kay, Evelyn. *The ACT Guide to Children's Television or How to Treat TV with T.L.C.* Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1979.

This book is directed towards parents of school-age children. Action for Children's Television (ACT) works toward the improvement of children's television through education and legal action. Learning to judge the value of a television program is an integral responsibility of parents of young children. Many methods of examining a television show are discussed. Suggestions included in this book are criteria for judging TV shows, analyses of commercial advertising, and charts to help a child become a more

critical viewer. The book includes statistics, discussion topics, activities, and examples of both good and bad TV shows. This comprehensive guide directs parents to both sources and assistance in evaluating television for the child.

Singer, Dorothy G.; Singer, Jerome L.; and Zuckerman, Diana M. *Teaching Television*. New York, NY: The Dial Press, 1981.

This book stresses the importance of a child's active TV viewing to get the most out of the television shows being watched. Activities are suggested to stimulate the child's critical thinking about television. The book provides ways to limit a child's TV watching, while assisting the parent to learn to live with TV in a way that is consistent with the values of education.

Winn, Marie. *The Plug-In Drug*. New York, NY: The Viking Press, 1977.

This book presents all the negative aspects of television for young children. It gives an account of the declining skills, concentration, and interest in other activities of children in the television generation. Also argued is the theory of the lesser of two evils, that television is better than inattentive, unconcerned parents. The author opposes this theory because there are other alternatives. Examples and suggestions for freeing a child or a family from television are offered.

Appendix F

Books and Organizations with Information on Safety, First Aid, and Health

Books

Arena, Jay M. and Bachar, Miriam. *Child Safety is No Accident: A Parents' Handbook of Emergencies*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1978.

This practical guide helps the adult develop an attitude toward safety and accident prevention. Special concerns for the developing child are listed, and relevant first aid procedures for accident hazards are categorized. Instructions for care in emergency situations are also provided.

Fontana, Vincent J. *A Parents' Guide to Child Safety*. New York, NY: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1973.

This book concentrates on injuries and first aid for the child, although all suggestions can be applied to adults. The main areas discussed are poisoning, vehicle and machinery safety, accidental strangulation, injury from animals, and safety in the home. Suggestions in the book include safety rules, treatment for injuries, and preventative advice.

Glenn, Gary A. and Glenn, Peggy. *Don't Get Burned: A Family Fire-Safety Guide*. Huntington Beach, CA: Aames-Allen Publishing Co., 1982.

This book describes, with the aid of anecdotes, a multitude of fires — both types and causes. Photographs illustrate the tragic

results of many fires. The book outlines fire prevention procedures, ways to extinguish different types of fires, what to do in case of fire, and first aid for burns.

Gore, Harriet Margolis. *What To Do When There's No One But You*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974.

This children's book relates stories to illustrate common accidents which may occur in a child's life. Step-by-step directions and illustrations provide instructions for first aid, including the need for medical attention for severe injuries. This book is appropriate for parents to read with their child because of the combined story and instructional format of this book.

Green, Martin I. *A Sigh of Relief*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1977.

Included in this book are tips on accident prevention and care for emergency situations. The first part outlines safety strategies in the following areas: home, infant equipment, school, toys, car, bicycle, sports, camping, and water. There are charts for noting emergency medical information, immunizations and childhood illnesses. Also, information is provided for first aid supplies and for recognizing drug effects. The second part describes a variety of emergency first-aid procedures in large text and pictures.

Pantell, Robert H.; Fries, James F.; Vickery, Donald M. *Taking Care of Your Child*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1977.

This comprehensive book is divided into three parts. The first part provides background information for pregnancy through birth and development to adulthood. This section includes advice on school problems, medical visits, and common household medicinal/medical needs. The second part contains graphic charts and text providing specific guidance for common medical problems. Symptoms can be checked with this guide and advice for

either home or medical follow-up is recommended. Techniques for home treatment and preparation for medical treatment are provided. The final part includes family records to keep track of your child's growth and immunizations. This book provides assistance in caring for the child.

Waisbren, Burton A. and Waisbren, Charles. *The Family First-Aid Handbook*. New York, NY: Grosset and Dunlap, 1978.

This book focuses on two issues: what to do when accidents happen and how to prevent accidents. Section I describes what to do once an accident has occurred. It recommends not only home treatment and/or suggested medical care, but also this guide tells what the doctor will do, including tests ordered or recommended follow-up treatment. Section II examines each room in the house with specific recommendations for accident prevention. Included is potential injury/illness due to sports, allergic reactions, or child abuse. Section III concludes the guide with instructions for mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and CPR.

Organizations

American Academy of Pediatrics
1801 Hinman Ave.
Evanston, IL 60204

Recommended materials: yearly publications catalog; handbooks, pamphlets, brochures, charts and posters available on subjects including child health, first-aid and poisoning, injury prevention, bicycle safety, and television and the family.



American Automobile Association
Traffic Safety Department
8111 Gatehouse Rd.
Falls Church, VA 22047

Contact your local chapter. Pamphlets, posters, movies, and materials are available on a variety of subjects, including school safety, traffic and pedestrian safety, bicycle and automobile safety, and alcohol education. Send for the *Traffic Safety Catalog*, *Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Education Materials Catalog*, and price lists. Materials are free or low cost.

Recommended materials: *The Safest Route to School* (Stock #3201); *Safe Walking Tips* (Stock #3311); *Bicycling Is Great Fun* (Stock #3241); *Parents Buying Your Child A Bike?* (Stock #3207); *Model Bicycle Ordinance* (Stock #3206); *Tips for Safe School Bus Riding* (Stock #3286); *School Trip Safety Summary/Resource Guide* (Stock #3212); *The Young Pedestrian* (Stock #3162); *Starting Early Kit — Grades K-6* (Stock #3462).

American Heart Association
National Center
7320 Greenville Ave.
Dallas, TX 75231

Contact your local chapter.

Recommended materials: *Heart Health Education Materials for Young Programming* brochure. Send for the most recent version. (Materials intended for use by classroom teachers, health and science educators, nurses and other health professionals, but it is possible to order single copies of many printed items.)

Materials available on subjects including habits for healthier hearts, smoking and heart disease, and nutrition, fitness, and exercise.

American Lung Association
1740 Broadway
New York, NY 10019

Contact your local chapter. Write for the most recent catalog. Recommended materials: *Keep Your Child from Choking* (#0062).

American Red Cross
National Headquarters
18th and E Sts.
Washington, DC 20006

Recommended materials: *Community Services Courses Brochure*.
Examples of courses offered at the local level: Basic First Aid Training for Young People; Standard First Aid and Personal Safety (Adult); Advanced First Aid and Emergency Care (Adult); Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (Adult); Water Safety; Small Craft Safety.

A.R.C. recommends taking a first-aid course and using information gained from accompanying textbooks to put together and to use a family first-aid kit properly.

Boy Scouts of America
Relationships Division
1325 Walnut Hill Ln.
Irving, TX 75062

Not for Scouts only!

Recommended materials: *Family Forum Guidebook* (Stock #4-402); *Cub Scout Family Book* (Stock #3846); *Cub Scout Family Action Book* (Stock #3900); *Prepared for Today* — Booklet in English, English/Spanish, English/Vietnamese/Lao (Stock #3941); *Family Living Scout Skill Book* (Stock #6587); *Family Living Can-Do Kit* (Stock #18-307); *Tiger Club — BSA Family Activity Book* (Stock #3932).

Camp Fire, Inc.
Program Department
4601 Madison Ave.
Kansas City, MO 64112

Recommended materials: "I Can Do It" Program/"Growing Up Smart" Program — Boston Council; "Kids Independence Development System" (KIDS) — Atlanta Council. Check local Council for programs and materials.

Children's Information Workshop
P.O. Box 14236
Washington, DC 20044

Recommended materials: *A List of One Hundred and One Free Publications About Children and Adolescents.*

Pamphlets available in six major areas: prenatal and infant care; education and schooling; health care diseases and nutrition; human development and behavior; diseases and developmental disorders; and additional resources. For example:

- 16. *All About Metric*
- 39. *Auto Safety and Your Child*
- 42. *Child Safety*
- 61. *When Your Child Goes to the Hospital*

Consumer Information Center
Pueblo, CO 81009

There are a number of publications regarding automobiles, children, health, employment and education, food, gardening, housing, money management, travel and hobbies, and others.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
National Headquarters
Federal Center Plaza
500 C St., S.W.
Washington, DC 20472

Contact your regional office located in Boston, MA; New York, NY; Philadelphia, PA; Atlanta, GA; Chicago, IL; Denton, TX; Kansas City, MO; Denver, CO; San Francisco, CA; or Bothell, WA.

FEMA is a federal agency working with state and local levels for emergency management, for both preparedness and response to life and property threatening situations. They provide a variety of resources and guidance as well as practical assistance in emergencies exceeding local capabilities. Emergencies covered by FEMA range from earthquakes to floods to nuclear disasters. Write for the *Publication Catalog* (FEMA-20).

Girl Scouts of the USA
830 3rd Ave. and 51st St.
New York, NY 10022

Contact your local council.

Tel-Med Inc.
952 S. Mt. Vernon Ave.
P.O. Box 1500
Colton, CA 92324

A telephone health library for the public. Tapes available on subjects such as: children's health, poisons, first-aid, diet and proper eating, common health issues and consumer information. Send for the Tel-Med brochure which lists the tapes and the Tel-Med phone numbers for your area. Then call the Tel-Med number in your area and the operator will play the tape you request.

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
Toll Free Number: 1-800-638-2772 (CPSC)

Purchase documents from: Superintendent of Documents,
U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402.

Recommended materials: *List of Consumer Product Safety Commission Publications for Sale through Government Printing Office.*

Pamphlets available on subjects including bicycles, children's products, flammable products and ignition sources, playground equipment, poison prevention, power lawn mowers, and general information about product safety.

YMCA
316 Huntington Ave.
Boston, MA

Contact your local chapter.

YWCA
Eastern Seaboard Office
135 W. 50th St., 4th Fl.
New York, NY 10020

Contact your local chapter.

Courses offered in a wide variety of subjects, including: first aid; water safety; and kid's survival skills.

Additional Sources:

1. Contact local fire departments for information on first aid. Some departments instruct members of the community; others act as referral agents.

2. Contact insurance companies for brochures on home safety, fire prevention, accident prevention, and other safety issues.

3. Contact National Clearinghouse for Poison Control Centers to obtain information about your state's poison center. Centers have a poison hot-line to call. Professionals are prepared to handle emergencies and general information questions. Many centers sponsor public education efforts on poison prevention, develop poison information materials for public distribution, and provide groups and organizations with speakers on poison prevention. Families can receive single copies of poison prevention materials by sending a stamped, self-addressed, business-sized envelope to their local poison control center.

National Clearinghouse for Poison Control Centers
Division of Poison Control — Bureau of Drugs
Food and Drug Administration — Room 13-45
Park Lawn Bldg.
5600 Fisher's Ln.
Rockville, MD 20857

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Recently, she was visiting professor at the Brisbane College of Advanced Education in Brisbane, Australia, and guest lecturer at the Sydney College of Advanced Education in Newtown, Australia. She lectured in Australia on programs for children and their families, and with others, collected information on children's use of out-of-school time.

Joan, her husband Gary, and her son Craig, who is now a teenager, live in a suburb of Boston.

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